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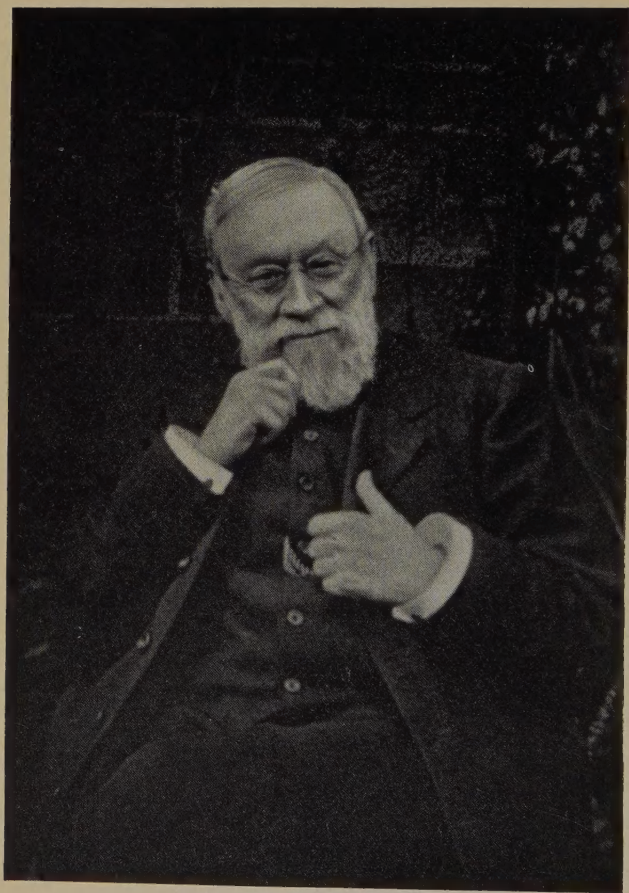
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Miss H

no marks after p. 66

Indeed

J. E. H. THOMSON, D.D.



REV. J. E. H. THOMSON, D.D.

Frontispiece

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J. E. H. THOMSON, D.D.

SCHOLAR AND MISSIONARY IN
THE HOLY LAND

BY

WILLIAM EWING, M.C., D.D.

With Foreword by

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR DAVID BRUCE

K.C.B., LL.D., Etc.

PRESIDENT OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION

1924-1925

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FOREWORD

I HAVE had the manuscript of this book read to me with great pleasure and profit.

When the Rev. J. E. H. Thomson came to Stirling in 1874, I was nineteen years of age and he was some dozen years my senior. I cannot remember at this distance of time how or when we first met, but in a short time we certainly became great friends. Thomson moreover was fond of the society of young people, and as our house was well provided for in this respect he was a frequent visitor. J. E. H., as he was affectionately and familiarly known, was of a most cheerful disposition, always brimming over with enthusiasm, never tired of advising and encouraging the young people in their musical and other artistic adventures. After fifty years I can still picture him standing over the piano in the drawing-room eagerly directing the singing of 'Kathleen Mavourneen' or some other of the old songs which were in vogue in that generation.

Thomson never had a church of his own, but he sometimes preached in the church in Stirling. Many people liked his sermons, as they were carefully prepared, logical, and scholarly, but generally he was thought to preach over the heads of the ordinary congregation. He was a born scholar. He lived surrounded by books. His study in Allan Park was lined

with them from floor to ceiling. They were not confined to the shelves, but overflowed on to the floor, chairs, and tables, so that there was little room left to move in. He was most generous in lending them. I remember having on loan his Smith's *Classical Dictionary* and other books of reference for several months when I was reading up Greek and Latin for a University examination.

He also gave unstintingly and ungrudgingly of his time and energy in helping us younger men in our work. As an example of this, I may relate that about this time my friend Charles H. Todd and I went to his room for several months at seven o'clock in the morning to read German. In this way we read through a great deal of Goethe and Schiller, Todd, who had been on the Continent for a year or more, acting as interpreter and Thomson as historical and literary commentator.

In 1877 I left Stirling for Edinburgh to attend the medical classes of the University, and in 1883 I joined the Medical Department of the Army. Since that date I have never met my old friend, but have always looked back with the greatest affection, pleasure, and gratitude to his brilliant, cheerful, and helpful personality.

DAVID BRUCE.

MADEIRA, February 25, 1925.

PREFACE

MANY of Dr. Thomson's friends desired to have some permanent record of his life and work. In compliance with their wishes I have written this book. Materials for certain periods of Dr. Thomson's life were scanty. He left a brief sketch in pencil dealing with his boyhood and school-days. Some time later for many years he kept a diary, but the entries are for the most part too short to be useful. While in Palestine he wrote a brief account monthly of the things that had occupied him. For the last twenty years of his life I had the privilege of his intimate and unbroken friendship.

For information and help I owe special thanks to Major-General Sir David Bruce ; Rev. W. B. R. Wilson, Dollar ; Rev. J. S. Scotland, Newport, Fife ; Rev. Walter Scott, M.A., Stirling ; Rev. Dr. Charles Jerdan, Greenock ; D. B. Morris, Town Clerk, Stirling ; David Kinross, Stirling ; Ex-Provost James Thomson, Stirling ; the late John Hutchison, LL.D., Glasgow ; and Ebenezer Russell, Glasgow. I am indebted to Dr. James Duncan Maclaren, Dr. Thomson's cousin, for reminiscences of old days ; and to John Thomson, Architect, Glasgow, son of 'Greek Thomson.' My friend, the Rev. C. H. Todd, M.A., Aberdeen, added to other kindnesses by reading carefully the manuscript. To the deep sorrow of

a wide circle he passed away while these pages were being printed.

For permission kindly granted to make use of articles in their publications I have to thank Messrs. Macmillan and Co., Ltd., London; Rev. Professor Stanley A. Cook, D.D., Editor of the *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*; Rev. President M. G. Kyle, D.D., LL.D., Editor of *Bibliotheca Sacra*; and Rev. J. H. Leckie, D.D., for liberty to quote from his *Fergus Ferguson, D.D. : His Theology and Heresy Trial*.

During the progress of the work I enjoyed the advantage of frequent conference with Mrs. Thomson. Without her assistance, indeed, the book could hardly have been written. Almost before the ink was dry upon the closing pages she was taken from us, answering a sudden call to higher service. And so the volume she eagerly longed to see, enshrining the memory of her husband, becomes in some sort her memorial too.

W. E.

EDINBURGH, *September 1925.*

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CHAPTER I

Forebears—Childhood in Glasgow, Falkirk, Dunipace, and
Blairlogie—Mother

THREE brothers named Thomson, who had been 'out' at the battle of Bothwell Bridge in 1679, were taken and imprisoned in Stirling Castle for complicity in the risings of that time. The rigours of confinement were softened for them by the ingenuity of the wife of one of them. Learning that they occupied a cell overlooking what is now 'the Back Walk,' she passed along the slope singing a familiar song, and introduced their names into the chorus; thus attracting the attention of the prisoners without arousing the interest of the guard. An understanding was established: they let down a cord in the dark, and drew up 'comforts' provided by her. Archbishop Leighton, then principal churchman in the district, had little zeal for such prosecutions. Probably to him the brothers owed their release.

John, the eldest of the three, owned a farm in the Denny Greens, on the upper waters of the Carron. Late in life he surprised his friends, who thought him a confirmed bachelor, by marrying a widow. She bore him an only son, also called John, who maintained the family tradition for piety. He 'sat under' the saintly Mr. Robe of Kilsyth. He was no great manager, and made little of the moorland farm his father had left him. Hoping to do better in a 'Carse' farm, he sold his land and took a holding in Fife, on

the Kinnaird estate. He and his wife died early, leaving a family of four daughters and one son, John, who was the youngest. This son married twice. His second wife was Elizabeth Cooper, a native of Aberdeen, who had come to Balfron with her brother, the Burgher minister there. As a girl she had been at school with Lord Byron, the future poet being then known as 'the laddie wi' the feeties.' He was living with his mother in comparative poverty, his father, Captain Byron, having 'squandered the lands o' Gight awa'.' There were eight children of John's first marriage, and twelve of the second.

John became book-keeper in the Carron Iron Company, and later held the same post in Kirkman and Findlay's print work at Balfron. He declined an offer of the managership. The partners frequently visited the works on Sundays for business purposes. This did not suit John's Sabbatarian views. He declined also the more lucrative situation of book-keeper in the Glasgow house, fearing for his children amid the seductions of the city. The first family of three sons and five daughters all grew up. John was a partner in the firm to which his father was book-keeper. He was stationed on Heligoland, occupied in contravening the Berlin and Milan decrees of Napoleon, throwing contraband goods into Germany. He contracted consumption on the island. Under the passport of an American he went to Vienna, where he died during the occupation of that capital after the battle of Wagram. It was rumoured that he had been shot, his identity having been discovered. Michael was a midshipman. He gained his lieutenancy in a cutting-out expedition before Trafalgar, but died of wounds received.

William, the eldest of the second family, was a

brilliant student. He acted during one session for the Professor of Humanity in Glasgow University. He had great linguistic gifts. Latin and Greek, French and Italian, Hebrew and Chaldee, Syriac and Arabic he mastered with what seemed ease. In Balfron he taught French to a Highlandman who, in turn, taught him Gaelic. During the summer vacation he gave a good account of himself in the work of the farm. Later he showed a remarkable capacity for mechanics. He seems to have anticipated the discovery of the screw propeller. His studies in gunnery led to the invention of a gun which he called the Govanade. With youthful precipitance he fell in love, married, and had to settle down to work for the maintenance of his home. This gave the death-blow to hopes of entering the ministry which he had cherished. He turned to the teaching profession, for which he was well equipped. Leaving Balfron, he lived for a time in Glasgow, and removed to London in 1834. His thoughts were directed to Sierra Leone, where the Church Missionary Society required one with linguistic gifts for the work of translation. The region was known as 'The Englishman's Grave'; but, notwithstanding, he offered his services, was accepted, and sailed thither with his wife and family in 1837. There he and his wife died in 1843.

Two younger members of the family were notable men, Alexander and George. Mr. Foote, an eminent Glasgow architect, struck with the evidence of talent shown in certain drawings by Alexander, offered to take him as an apprentice. Pupil and teacher were of one spirit, and progress was rapid. Alexander early developed the qualities destined to win for him the honourable sobriquet of 'Greek Thomson.' Caught by his brother's enthusiasm, George also became an

architect. Subsequently they worked together ; but in the partnership the leadership of Alexander was proudly acknowledged. George had early developed an interest in Foreign Missions, and he preserved an eager outlook to the field, in the hope that the way might be opened for service. His opportunity came in 1871, when he sailed for Old Calabar. A record of what he did in that difficult and perilous country is preserved in the Memoir written by his nephew. A man of great heart, resourcefulness, and ability, he very truly laid down his life for Africa.

Older than these two, the eighth child of the second marriage, was Ebenezer, who became the father of the subject of this Memoir.

After John Thomson's death in 1824 his widow and the younger children migrated to Glasgow, which was even then a thriving town, although less than quarter its present size. There were many fair fields within easy reach of the Trongate. From their small house on the outskirts of the city the children were often attracted by the sweet stream and pleasant glades of the Kelvin. But sorrows fell thick upon them. In less than three years, between 1828 and 1830, the mother, the eldest sister, and three brothers died. The home was broken up, and the survivors found shelter in the house of their brother William. When he removed to London the five remaining, Ebenezer, Alexander, George, and two sisters, took up house together. They joined Gordon Street Church—now St. Vincent Street United Free Church—and took their full share in the work of the congregation, especially in the Sunday School. At the age of twenty-one, Ebenezer was ordained to the eldership. He had obtained the position of book-keeper in the firm of Wilson, James, and Kays, in which later he

became a partner. This business afterwards passed into the hands of Sir John Muir.

We have seen that John Thomson who died on the Fife farm left a family of five. The eldest daughter married a foreman moulder named John Honeyman. He belonged to a family of Honeymans who owned a bleach work in the village of Kennoway. A son of this marriage came south to Falkirk and engaged in fruit farming. One of his sons, in a youthful freak, ran off and joined the navy, much to his parents' displeasure, and evidently also to his own disillusionment. His mother, however, was a woman of resource. The warship to which he was assigned lay at Portsmouth. She contrived an interview with him, and by the simple expedient of exchanging clothes effected his escape. How she fared on discovery history saith not, but the lad seems to have had no trouble with the authorities. He returned to Falkirk and became a foreman moulder in the Carron Ironworks. His son John was a baker in Falkirk. He married Janet Maclaren, daughter of a sheep farmer in Balquhiddar. Living in the Rob Roy country, the family had a tradition of their own. Their account of the famous outlaw and his wife differed widely from what may be gathered from Sir Walter. It emphasized especially the ferocity of Helen MacGregor, who appeared like a tigress urging her cubs to murder and rapine.

John Honeyman died early. Two of his sons had died in infancy. He left a widow and one daughter, Catherine Ferguson, who, in 1840, became the wife of Ebenezer Thomson. Dr. James D. Maclaren, Dr. Thomson's cousin, who, happily, still is with us, remembers being present at the wedding. It is interesting to note that the 'best man' on that occasion was Mr. Edmond, who afterwards became

famous as Dr. Edmond of Highbury Presbyterian Church, London. The friendship between him and Ebenezer dated from the days of their boyhood in Balfron. In the troublous times that followed for young Edmond he found a restful retreat in the house of his dearest friend. The young couple took up house in Warwick Street, Glasgow, S.S., and there, on the 8th of August 1841, was born their only son, John Ebenezer Honeyman Thomson.

‘Scotland,’ writes Dr. Thomson, ‘passed through convulsions during the childhood and early life of my father and mother. The French Revolution sent most right-thinking people to a Conservative, or semi-Conservative attitude in regard to reform. The last battle—if the “battle of Bonnymuir” may be so described—fought on the soil of Great Britain took place in Stirlingshire, in 1820. The subsequent execution of Baird and Hardie produced a horror in Scotland that lasted even to my time. Hatred of George the Fourth, caused by his treatment of his Queen, was rampant. My mother, then a little girl, was frightened nearly out of her wits by a zealous pro-Queen orator who was holding forth on the road. He seized her as an example of innocence, to point his moral as to the King’s delinquencies. Earlier, my grandmother and some young friends went to a person who had been lady’s-maid in certain noble families, to learn finer sewing. One day they were denied admission to their teacher’s house. News had just arrived of the execution of Marie Antoinette, and the teacher was heard within bemoaning the event—“Ah! the poor Queen! Ah! the poor Queen!”’

In the ‘forties’ of last century Warwick Street and its neighbourhood formed a highly respectable district of the growing city. Long ago it became a central

area and fell on evil days. Before Thomson was eighteen months old the family moved to Pollok Street. During a street riot a bullet entered the Warwick Street kitchen, and narrowly missed killing his nurse. This, of course, he did not remember, but some of his recollections went back to very early days. Much of his time was spent in the house of his mother's mother, Thornbank, near Falkirk. He distinctly remembered a fall down stairs there, at an age when climbing was a feat achieved on hands and knees.

Connected with Thornbank was a farm rented by a man for whom the old bothie was adapted as a dwelling-house, the farm labourer occupying the gatehouse. Thornbank had been built by a distiller. 'There was a large cellar,' writes Thomson, 'to which access was obtained by a trap-door under a bed. This suggested an institution for defrauding the revenue by hiding malt that had paid no duty. More securely to guard the secret, the house was declared to be haunted, and the ghost located in this back bedroom—a little dark room which my grandmother preferred to occupy.' A spacious garden with cherry trees where four paths met suggested the Garden of Eden to the childish mind. More prosaic, but hardly less interesting, was the barn in the farm steading, where the old farmer, Robin Grosart, and his man, Willie Hardie, threshed corn with flails. Noting his ambition to do as they did, Grosart supplied John with a miniature flail, or 'whale,' as he called it.

'Robin was a character—taciturn, but kindly. The story went that his own sister, going into Falkirk one day, passed him on the same side of the road, and he took no notice of her. Turning and laying hold on him, she exclaimed, "Dear me, Robin, div ye no ken me?"' thinking that some blight had obscured

her brother's intellect. The answer reassured her :
" I ken ye weel eneuch, but I had naething to say
til ye."

' Beyond the road, Grahamston Avenue, which bounded the garden, was a field belonging to Robin's farm. In the hedge at the side of the field was an old yew tree, which originally grew in the middle of the field. It had been planted, so local tradition said, to mark the place where John de Graham, Wallace's Achates, fell in the battle of Falkirk. Early in his tenancy Robin transplanted it to the hedge. Then, as people were always coming to take bits of it, and possibly intruding into his field, he deliberately cut it down. I remember the sorrow with which I looked down into the hole whence it had been dug up, where the red roots were showing. To my imagination they represented the blood of the hero. My mother got a pair of fire-screen handles made out of the wood.

' A boy named Mountgale—pronounced " Mungle "—was deputed to look after me. He was about eight years old, the son of the labourer in the gate-house. I have but a dim recollection of him helping in digging operations, and of my strutting before " my man Henry Mungle," whose wages, so I declared, were his food and " sikksin " (sixpence) on Saturday.

' My earliest railway journeys were made between Glasgow and Falkirk upper station. Robin Grosart's cart conveyed us from the station to Thornbank, and at the end of our visit took us back again. To miss the train owing to the failure of the broken-winded steed involved a wait of some hours. Trains were not so frequent then as now, and telegraphs did not exist.

' My sister was about two years younger than I. A glimpse of her I can recall. It could not be many

weeks before her death. Father and mother were seated on the sofa in the parlour in Pollok Street, on a bright Sabbath afternoon ; mother and sister were at one end, father and I at the other. He was teaching me about God. I recall my difficulty about the first person in the Godhead. This term seemed to suggest a yet higher God. I remember my puzzled efforts to make him understand my difficulty. An interlude was afforded by my sister toddling along the back of the sofa and seating herself between my father and me. She died on April 20, 1845. My memory does not carry me beyond the darkened house, and the medical efforts to save the child.'

One sees here already the budding theologian and controversialist. Another incident reveals his habit of noting and remembering. His father, during the first Sikh War, was reading the newspaper and scanning the map of India in an old atlas which was an heirloom. 'It exhibited the condition of geography and the distribution of states before the Napoleonic era. Germany was divided into circles: France into provinces.'

The month of September 1847 was spent by the family in Arran, near Lamlash. The voyage from the Broomielaw took ten hours. From the ship the quay was reached in the dark by a small boat. Dr. Thomson recalled 'the Rembrandtesque effects—sailor men with torches that lit up their red faces and sandy hair ; the dark, shiny quay, with its brown seaweed ; the confusion of baggage, merchandise, and fish.' Arran was indeed primitive then. Their house contained a but and a ben with a room between, and a trap-stair by which attics were reached—attics so low in the ceiling that one could not stand upright. 'My memory of that visit is full of burns bowered in

honeysuckle and alive with trout.' A visit was made to Holy Island, where he first made acquaintance with ants. 'Sitting on an ant-hill leads to rather a painful idea of the activity of these models of industry. I do not recall the pain, but I do recall seeing the ants carrying their chrysalises, wrongly called their eggs.'

'Shortly after our return to Glasgow, my father, as an elder, was called to visit a patient in his district who was suffering from typhus fever. He caught the infection, and his illness terminated fatally on the 20th of October. I had been sent to my aunt's house in Abbotsford Place. My uncle Alexander brought the sad news. I shed tears, I believe, not as understanding my loss, but in sympathy with the tears of others.' He could not, indeed, realize how great his loss was. Dr. Maclaren recalls Ebenezer as a fine figure of a man, of cultivated mind, and widely read, but chiefly notable for the strength and beauty of his character. His death was mourned by the whole community, and especially by the congregation who had learned to value his calm wisdom, his warm heart, and ready sympathy.

Mrs. Honeyman gave up her house, Thornbank, came to live with her widowed daughter in Pollok Street, and proved a very gracious influence in the little boy's life. He was sent to a school kept by two Misses Reid. Most of the pupils were girls of from five to fourteen, who were models of propriety. With the bunch of boys aged from five to seven it was different. If not fully employed, their animal spirits overflowed, and wrestling matches on the floor were popular. Standing in the corner was the usual punishment. Flagrant misdemeanants were put into a closet where boots and shoes were kept. Vain attempts

were made to teach the boys to knit and crochet. They were interested in making bone or wooden crochet needles for the girls. Real success was achieved by setting them in the window with slate and pencil to draw what they saw passing in the street. It was a fascinating business, and very wonderful were the results: men, women, dogs, cows, horses, and carts serving as models. We can see little Thomson brightening at praise bestowed on his drawing of a fire engine. This stimulated his delight in drawing, for which he had already shown some natural taste. Many years later drawings of his were found which his father had dated 1845. He was very deft in the use of the pencil, and sketching was with him a pleasant pastime.

A companion of those days was a lad, Pat Pearson, the same age as himself. Certain whimsical memories gathered round him. They had found a bean. Thomson's imagination got to work on it. If planted it would yield twenty or thirty beans. These planted would yield twenty or thirty times that number. Meantime Pat, fumbling with the bean, had got it into his mouth, and, just as Thomson had secured an extensive farm with the produce, Pat announced that he had eaten it!

Mrs. Thomson had told her son about the internal fires of the earth. This information was passed on to Pat, who sprang in terror from a hole they were digging, lest he should slip through into that awful furnace. Thomson calmed his fears by reminding him of a railway cutting much deeper than their hole, where no fire was reached.

Pat had doubts about the presence of God. 'When the shutters are shut, how can God come in?' he demanded. Nothing daunted, his youthful instructor

proceeded to close the shutters of the room they were in. It was bright sunshine, and light, with motes dancing in the rays, shone in through the chinks at the joints. 'God can come where light comes' was the triumphant answer to his friend's difficulty: not, he thought, with any conscious identification of God with light.

Pat was a lad of some resource. In a time of bad trade his father became bankrupt, and could find nothing to do. One day a weird voice was heard singing in the street. Poor Pat thought that in this way he might benefit the family finances. They left the neighbourhood, and the friends never met again. 'Many years afterwards,' says Thomson, 'at a friend's house I met a young, pretty woman whom I took to be a widow. My friend told me that she had divorced her husband, that another man was eager to marry her, that she liked him, but, as her divorced husband still lived, she would not hear of marriage. That other man was Pearson. Whether he at length overcame her scruples, or her scoundrel of a husband died, I never learned.'

The year after Thomson's father died, Mr. Donald Kempt, auctioneer, took the house over theirs in Pollok Street. The boy was ever welcome in his large and happy household. A man of high character and wisdom, he exercised a wholesome influence on the growing lad, for which Thomson was ever grateful. 'Once,' says the latter, 'he was hearing me and one of his daughters spelling. The word "built" stumped us. "John," he said, "you ought to be able to spell that." Why he said it I know not, but it gave me the idea that something more was expected of me than of others.' Mr. Kempt brought home many of the books sent for sale, and allowed the lau

freely to browse among them. In this way he made acquaintance with the early volumes of *Chambers's Journal*—‘the big folios in which were stories by Mrs. S. C. Hall and other forgotten writers’—; volumes of Natural History in which a splendid Bengal tiger formed the frontispiece; *The Peep of Day* and *Æsop's Fables*; Goldsmith's *History of England* brought up to the accession of Queen Victoria, in which he read, happily without understanding, the unedifying details of the trial of Queen Caroline; also that delightfully inaccurate book, Goldsmith's *Animated Nature*. He also read a book on chemistry which gave him ten or eleven notions of the atomic weights of the elements, making certain permanent impressions on his mind. A collection of caricatures dating from about 1806-1830 interested him greatly. There were satires on the Holy Alliance and pictures of the hobby-horse, the ancient prototype of the modern cycle.

In those days Thomson's ideas of Scottish history were gathered mainly from Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*, and of English history from a book entitled *English History in Symbol*. A stroke represented a man; a stroke with an oak leaf was an Englishman; with a thistle, a Scotsman. A stroke surmounted by a crown was a king. A roughly drawn spindle was a woman. The fleur-de-lis stood for France. An astonishing amount of information was conveyed in this way.

Of the year 1848 certain memories remained. ‘Then occurred the Revolution in France, when Louis Philippe was deprived of his throne; the Pope fled to Gaeta; Italy and Germany were in a state of uproar. Glasgow celebrated the occasion with a riot. I wished to go and see the fun in the city, whence came the constant crackle of firearms, but I was

forbidden. Two ladies rushed in to my mother in the utmost trepidation, crying, "What shall we do? The rioters are coming down the Paisley Road and we shall all be killed." "If they came," said my mother, "I would close the shutters and lie down on the floor: there no chance bullets could hit me." "They might break into the house" was the tearful reply. "Well," answered my mother, "what could we do? We must let them take what they like and hope that Government will make good our loss." As a matter of fact the riot was very quickly quelled. Many citizens banded themselves together as special constables; others, like my uncle George, helped without oath or anything.'

The summer of that year was spent at Port Bannatyne near Rothesay. A servant hailing from Lochgilphead was a perfect mine of information regarding the denizens of the beach and shallow water. Thrilling interest was awakened in cockles, lady fish, scoot fish, mussels, dog whelks, scad fish, periwinkles, and several species of medusae. A companion part of the time was James D. Maclaren, his cousin, 'by dint of nine years' seniority a hero in my eyes. Moreover, he was already over six feet in height.' A never-to-be-forgotten friend met here was an old lady, Mrs. Younger of Alloa, grandmother of the late M.P. for Ayr Boroughs, 'whose complete and kindly knowledge of boy nature drew my love.' Her daughters became friends of Mrs. Thomson, and the friendship went down to the third and fourth generation.

The house in Pollok Street was what is known as a half flat in a tenement. The building had been begun by a firm that went bankrupt, and was finished by the creditors as the best way of working themselves free. None of the work was good. The plumber-

work was very bad. The cistern supplying drinking water was connected with the system of water-closets. Any defect led to contamination of the whole series in the flats arranged one under the other as if to secure the greatest possible damage. 'I took typhoid fever very severely,' says Dr. Thomson, 'and retained the poison in my system. A remittent fever seized me at intervals of a little over a month, with consequences affecting my whole life. It stunted my growth and prevented me from taking up physical exercises. It threw me in upon myself, making me a voracious and omnivorous reader.' Thanks to Mr. Kempt there was no lack of literature. Story books—not precisely novels, which were nominally taboo—Josephus, Rollin's *Ancient History*, and such works attracted him. We can see him on the floor with shells reconstructing the battle of Marathon; grieving over the defeat and betrayal of Hannibal, who was one of his great heroes; or painting the battle of the Thrasymene lake in glowing colours, vainly attempting to rouse the interest of a companion 'whose patriotism left no room for any beside Wallace—a Wallace of school-boy legend.'

'My grand-aunt,' writes Dr. Thomson, 'lived at Dunipace Mills, and there mainly my holidays were spent. The farm and the mills were the property of the Carron Company. One mill was for grinding charcoal, finely ground charcoal being used in facing the moulds for castings. Beside it stood a flour mill of which my aunt was tenant. They were called respectively the Black and the White Mill.' Ferguson, the Black miller, was great on bees. At his hives John used to watch with keen interest the battles fought between marauding wasps and defending bees. 'The White miller was a dog-fancier,' continues

Dr. Thomson. 'He possessed a bull-pup which was stolen from the mill by a tramp. The thief was caught, and at his trial in Stirling my mother and cousin James had to appear as witnesses. We made an expedition of it, crossing the field of Bannockburn, where the story of the battle and the pits impressed me. Acting on youthful instinct, on my return I dug pits in the soft ground from which the potatoes had been removed. One of the maids kindly went out of her way to put her foot in a pit and pretend to get a great fright—to my intense joy.'

The big mill wheels and machinery of the sluices attracted the boy and led to some perilous adventures. He found it one thing to be between the great wheels at rest, and quite a different thing to be there when they started going round, with the roar of water over them. Interfering with the sluice which was raised for the cleaning of the mill lead, he set it in motion, and was promptly knocked down by the handle. Fortunately he fell with his heels out from the thundering descent of the sluice. He was taken up unconscious, but not seriously injured.

The dogs about the farm were the source of endless interest and amusement, especially Baggles, an extraordinarily ugly white bull-dog. Fierce to stranger dogs and men, he lived on peaceable terms with the canine citizens of the farm 'toon.' Baggles had a fixed idea that his function in life was to kill rats. The cry of 'rats' ever set him furiously to work. He often caught them in the piggery. But he lacked discrimination. A litter of young pigs he evidently thought were rather large rats, and his formidable jaws had disposed of two of them before he was observed.

'My cousin,' says Dr. Thomson, 'then beginning

his medical studies, full of the omnipotence of training, fancied that Baggles might be trained to act as a collie. He accompanied the herd-boy with Baggles. A cow made for a gate carelessly left open. The would-be trainer shouted "Shoo!" Baggles took that to mean "Charge!" He rushed for the cow, seized it by the nose, and brought it to the ground. Baggles had to be knocked insensible and his teeth forced open before the cow could be released. Baggles never forgave that cow. The sight of her was like the proverbial red rag to a bull: so she was sold for the sake of peace!

'One afternoon Baggles was found barking furiously at the door of his kennel. He would cease for a moment and enter, only to reappear suddenly, barking more wildly than ever. Somehow a barrel hoop had got among the straw in the kennel. When he sat upon it, the hoop sprang up and hit him, and of course it disappeared when he came out.

'A stick that proved too big for the kitchen fire was thrown out and fell within his reach. It offended him by smoking. He resented this, but it continued. He flew at it in a rage. It burned him, and he leapt back with a yelp, only to charge again. The afternoon saw him black, but triumphant. The log no longer ventured to smoke in his presence!'

The little back bedroom which he there occupied had many associations for John. 'I remember,' he says, 'reading a strange conglomeration: *Chevy Chase*, Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner*, and some of the *Arabian Nights*. The last I was too young fully to enjoy. *The Ancient Mariner* thrilled me strangely. The picture of the sun shining through the bars of the phantom ship I saw in the darkness when I should have been asleep.'

Of his aunt he had the most affectionate memories. 'To my childish mind,' he says, 'she was the embodiment of all things lovable. That she was beautiful, even as an old woman, every one who saw her would admit. That she was loving and generous to the last degree all who came in contact with her knew. I remember our journey to the mill, being met at the station by the big cart that conveyed us, my mother, grandmother, and myself, with our luggage, and reaching the turn where we caught sight of the mill house, and aunt standing on the "loupin' on" steps, shading her eyes, looking along the road to see if we were coming. Then the welcome—tea, with thick cream and glorious scones, followed by renewed acquaintance with all the dogs, cats, cows, horses, and even pigs, about the premises: the garden, the mills, and the spacious country. What a change for a boy brought up in the city, with its straight streets and hard pavements!

'One peculiarity of my aunt was her faculty for seeing good fortune in everything. In all circumstances her good Scotch phrase was, "Arena' we rale fortunit na'?" Once my mother and she, with me as attendant, set out on a five-mile walk to pay a visit. About three-quarters of the journey were passed when a thunderstorm broke on us. We paddled on in the pouring rain, I mentally growling, as I had been drawn away from projects of my own, no doubt to keep me under the eye of authority. In this plight my aunt repeated her formula with the reason annexed—"We got a fair start." I thought the fair start was the allurements that led us into the mess! The good woman always saw the bright side of things.'

Of Dunipace House Dr. Thomson says, 'It was

possessed by John H. Brown, Esq., the famous ornithologist. It had belonged to a Primrose, a relative of the present Earl of Rosebery. He forfeited his estates and lost his life because he showed Prince Charlie the ford over the Carron. The estate was bought by Mr. Spottiswoode, a London merchant, and excellent landlord, who left the estate to his granddaughter, the mother of the ornithologist.'

Of two mounds standing in front of the house strange tales are told. One, accepted by George Buchanan, is to the effect that they were erected to commemorate a treaty made between the Romans and the Scots: so one-half of the name is Celtic, the other Latin—*Duni*, 'mounds,' and *pacis*, 'of peace.' Geology, however, declares that, symmetrical and evenly rounded though they be, they are the product of natural forces. Both are crowned with trees, and on one of them is a rookery. There was a great colony of crows round the parish church at Larbert, and the story goes that at the Disruption a group of dissidents left the old rookery and settled here! Close beside one of the hills is, or was, the ruin of the first church of Dunipace, surrounded by the old churchyard, all overgrown with nettles.

A little down-stream from Dunipace, at the confluence of the Carron and the Bonny, tradition placed the meeting of Wallace and Bruce after the battle of Falkirk. It is said that after the defeat of Wallace, Bruce, who had fought under Edward, was taunted by some with eating his supper with hands red with the blood of his countrymen. Roused by the taunt, he strode away and, plunged in thought, paced the shore of the Carron. Wallace hailed him from the opposite bank. He listened to the patriot's urgent appeal that he should help his country in her dire

need. Whereupon he quitted Edward's army to take up the nobler rôle. 'Needless to say,' writes Dr. Thomson, 'the story is apocryphal. It mixes up the claimant to the Scottish crown with his son, who fought against Wallace, and his grandson, the victor at Bannockburn. Yet it had a profound influence on me. I always saw the two, Wallace and Bruce, with the stream between them, talking of the rights and wrongs of Scotland.'

In 1851 John's aunt went to live with her second son, who had become minister at Blairlogie, and the home at Dunipace was broken up. 'We left Dunipace,' says Dr. Thomson, 'on a wet day, in a capacious cart, and travelled in constant rain the twelve miles that separate it from Blairlogie. I recall looking out from under the covering to the hills. It was the first time I had come near hills that looked like mountains.

'Blairlogie is a village thrust into the range at the southern base of the Ochils. Close to the foot of the hill stands an ancient keep, called the Castle, with three tall firs in front. From it the straggling village street runs down to the main road. To the west rises the Abbey Craig, now adorned with a monument to Sir William Wallace. Behind that hill Wallace hid his men when he lured Cressingham to cross Stirling Bridge and expose half his army to the assault of Wallace's whole force. In autumn the Carse stretched away south and east, a very picture of plenty. Originally the sea covered the plain, but in prehistoric, although geologically recent times, the receding waters left it dry. Not far from Blairlogie, in the early part of last century, the skeleton of a whale was found in a field now called Whale Park. Fruit-growing was the main industry of the villagers—

apples and pears, gooseberries, cherries, and plums. In early May the district presented a lovely sight, with glorious masses of pink and white blossoms. During the first half of last century the place was a favourite resort of consumptives. They were supposed to derive great benefit from the milk of goats, which were kept in large flocks. By the time my cousin became minister the people had ceased to keep goats, they were so destructive to trees.

‘The church was a modest, white-washed edifice, betraying its ecclesiastical character by four long, pointed windows. It had been burned down and rebuilt some six years before my cousin’s settlement. The manse had been built for the first minister when, in consequence of a disputed settlement in the parish church, the malcontents applied with success to the Relief Presbytery for supply of ordinances.’ A description of the manse will give an idea of the simple life led by the country ministers of those days.

‘The house was of two storeys, one room in depth. To the left of the door was the parlour, walled by two box beds. To the right was the kitchen. Facing the doorway as you entered was a steep stair leading to the second floor. On the left was the principal living-room, with a bedroom off it, over the door. On the right was the best bedroom. A small trap-stair, closed in by a door, went up to attics that were unceiled. In the course of a century since its erection some improvements had been made. A scullery was added behind the kitchen, and a room corresponding to it behind the parlour. Thus one of the box beds disappeared. A window was made in the gable, and a recess formed in the parlour which was occupied by an easy-chair. The window-sill was broad because the gable wall was thick. It was an excellent recep-

tacle for books. There I made my first acquaintance with the Septuagint.

‘As geologists know, the Ochils are a range of igneous rocks shot up through the superincumbent strata of Old Red Sandstone. There was a thick vein of salmon-coloured barytes, the colour, brittle softness, and weight of which impressed me. I had heard of the hope that silver might be found in the Ochils, and wondered if it might not be here.

‘The village burn had its mystery for me. I determined to find its source, and scrambled up the gully. The stream divided. One branch came down the hill over a precipice like a miniature Lauterbrunnen. The other came purling down a gentler slope. I ultimately found that each started from a small mossy pool. I had nothing of the feelings of Bruce when he found the source of the Blue Nile!’

The holidays spent in these fair surroundings were always remembered with delight, especially those passed in company with his cousin, a missionary in Calabar, who was home on furlough. Natural History was a taste in common. His cousin had brought from Africa many specimens of beetles in spirits. John ‘assisted’ in setting them up, and incidentally acquired a ‘horror of the very smell of spirits, which would have proved an obstacle had there been any temptation to dram drinking.’ An attractive book, Paterson’s *Zoology*, gifted by Dr. Maclaren, opened to him the wonders of insect life. He records his surprise when the ladybird beetle opened and spread its wings for flight. He watched the various stages through which the creature passes, issuing in the glory of the butterfly. The development of the tadpole fascinated him. He devoted much time to the study of red and white ants that abound on the warm southern

slopes of the Ochils, and also to beetles. Characteristically he observes, 'The black beetles of towns are usually cockroaches, which are not beetles, and are not black.'

One incident belonging to this period he must relate himself. 'My interest in the burn of which I have spoken led me into a scrape with the village folk. Its poverty-struck appearance in the village street made me search into the causes of things. I found that a streamlet which ought to have fallen into the village burn was diverted, and led to a stone trough called "the doo's well," whence, by pipes, it was carried into the village. A sense of justice led me to use my spade to redirect the course of the streamlet. In consequence the village was liable every now and then to find its water supply failing. My well-meant efforts for the welfare of the village burn were not appreciated.'

But other interests here appealed to the growing lad. In the manse was an expurgated edition of Byron from which his minister cousin read him portions, thus kindling in him a love of Byron. He spent many hours on the hillsides with the poet as his companion, reading his darling verses. Scott's *Lady of the Lake* was a gift from his mother. He liked Macaulay's *Essays*. Carlyle's *French Revolution* he 'could not but read.' After Macaulay's clear, epigrammatic style, Carlyle's abrupt transitions troubled him, but the pictures of the time were burned into his mind. A former minister had founded a congregational library, in which there were many novels. These his cousin considered out of place in such a library, and banished them to the garret. There John found them, and browsed upon Scott, Galt, and others when he was not supposed to be reading anything so

frivolous. A school-fellow lent him a copy of Shakespeare in which he revelled. His cousin occasionally read to him from a book entitled *The Beauties of Shakespeare*. Such was his introduction to the greater literature of our country.

Of his ministerial cousin John writes: 'He was more than commonly tall, an accurate scholar, and a splendid Grecian. He was above all apt to teach. I was a subject of experiment ready to hand, anxious to learn, though perhaps not specially gifted with intelligence. He taught me the Greek and Hebrew alphabets. I had, among other lingual defects, a marked "burr." It was due to the pains he took that I got completely over this. In his preaching he made no parade of learning; but any one examining his discourses would find, often perhaps as much in what he avoided saying as in what he said, ample evidence of wide reading and careful study. He was always under restraint by reason of ill-health—congenital heart weakness. Only his intimate friends knew the treasures, mental and spiritual, hidden under his quiet demeanour.'

In later life, looking back to this time, Thomson penned the following picture of his mother: 'I suppose that no one—no rightly constituted person at any rate—ever puts any one nearly on a par with his mother. Those who have never enjoyed a mother's care, or who have lost it very early, are of course in a different category. My conviction that I was specially blessed in my mother may be the result of prejudice, but after careful balancing of all the facts, I do not think it is. Delicate health and residence in the country prevented her from receiving any but the slenderest education. She had, however, a retentive memory, and had occasional opportunity of reading

all sorts of books. In conversation with her grandmother she gained knowledge of legends that filled the imagination. She had great mental energy and versatility. She drew, painted, and wrote verses. I have mentioned the commemoration yew tree, planted where John de Graham fell, and how it fared at the hands of passers-by. My mother wrote a poem which she entitled "The Yew Tree's Complaint against the People of Falkirk." Some time after the verses appeared, two children were seen in the dark, hesitating to enter the shady Grahamston Avenue, because, as one said, "there was a tree there that spoke to folk."

'It is only now that I realize to some extent how wide her reading was. I have already told how she explained to me the then current geological theory that the earth was full of molten lava. I recall one picture of her, interrupted in her dressing by some questions of mine, sitting down on her bed and showing me that, although the sun appeared to go round the earth, it was the revolution of the earth round its own axis that gave rise to the appearance. A ball of worsted formed the symbol of the earth, and a fly was supposed to be perched on it. I was reminded how I had seen trees and houses seem to fly past when I was seated in a train. I think I grasped the idea. She told me about centripetal and centrifugal forces. A boy swinging round him a ball on a string stood for the sun with a planet revolving round it. Somehow she forestalled the difficulty about the antipodes. I never thought of the inhabitants of Australia walking like flies on the ceiling.

'She had an inherited suspicion of novels and novel reading, but had read all Sir Walter's novels. The earlier works of Dickens and Thackeray she had tried, but did not care for. She liked a straightforward

story. Miss Porter's *Scottish Chiefs* she ridiculed unmercifully. Of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* she never spoke. She read aloud to me Sir Walter's *Guy Mannering*, with running commentary that made it something more to me than all his other novels. She had read *Rob Roy* to her grandmother, herself a native of Rob Roy's country. The old lady's remarks as mother read were racy of old clan hatreds. "Nell MacGregor" she denounced in no measured terms. Her description of Rob Roy's wife was, "A ruthless old harridan who incited her sons to murder." For old Rob himself she seemed to have some respect.

'As a young woman my mother must have been beautiful. Tall, with black hair, and black, or rather dark brown eyes, good, straight features, nearly Greek, small flexible mouth, clearly marked eyebrows, and lively expression, she naturally impressed those who met her. She had an appearance of pride that was really due to sensitiveness. She held aloof from neighbours in ordinary matters, but when there was sickness or distress of any kind, not only was she ready to help, she was appealed to, it seemed, instinctively. I have told how the neighbours came to her when revolution had begun in a small way in Glasgow.

'Like many high-strung people, my mother frequently had dreams. She was quite above the sort of superstition that thinks it unlucky to dream of a cat or of a crying baby. Her dreams presented curiously exact pictures of events that were to happen, or that had happened, but of which she had not heard. These were purely family occurrences. Sometimes she dreamed the contents of a letter before it was received. One of her cousins, a sister of Dr. Maclaren, was nearly drowned. Before the news arrived she dreamed of seeing her aunt with Elizabeth

all wet on her knee. Before my father and she were married she dreamed all about a change of office he was making of which she had heard nothing. The most extraordinary of these dreams was connected with my father's death. For several months after his passing she always dreamed of him, and was beginning to long for those interviews in dreamland. One night he appeared to her and said, "Catherine, you know that I am dead and passed away: you must do without me after this." That, it seems to me, was as real a message from God as any vouchsafed to a prophet. It had to do only with herself: but providential dealings are often purely individual things.'

Dr. Maclaren testifies that in truth John's mother guarded him as the apple of her eye, and exercised a very strict control over the growing boy. Quick-tempered, as warm-hearted people often are, she was apt hotly to resent his peccadilloes. As she approached on punishment intent, he would execute a strategic movement to the rear, plying her meantime with self-exculpatory reasons and arguments, almost invariably with success before the limits of retreat were reached. The boy was father to the man. Who that knew him ever saw him in a difficulty at a loss for reason and argument?

CHAPTER II

Schools and Companions—Humours of Church and Social
Life in the Country—An Ideal Tutor

MENTION has been made of the Misses Reid's school to which John went before he was quite seven. His father had a theory that children were put to school too early. He therefore learned his letters at his mother's knee. Others had gone to school two years before him, and unfortunately his attendance was often interrupted by illness ; but for all that, ere a year was past he had caught them up in work, and gone ahead of most. They took advantage of opportunities to develop a slackness which he felt he could not afford. From this school he carried away a knowledge of Bateman's Hymns, long so popular in Sunday Schools. ' Wisely or unwisely,' he says, ' I never attended a Sunday School until I did so as a teacher, so had it not been for Miss Ellen Reid I should never have been able to sympathize with children singing " Happy Land," and " O that will be joyful." My first attempt to join in the singing had to be summarily stopped. I thought the singing tame. My ideal was the sailor who sang on the street, so I burst forth with greater force than melody !

' I went to school in March 1848. The summer holidays began in June. At the break-up the scholars were entertained with tartlets, lemonade, and most wonderful cocoa-nuts. Miss Reid introduced a nephew to bore holes in the ends of the nuts that we might

taste the milk, and then to break them with a coal-hammer that we might get the kernels. He must have been a lad of fourteen or so, in short jacket and grey trousers.'

The following spring John went to the school of a Mr. Anderson, who was known as a French scholar. Here writing, geography, and arithmetic were the main subjects of study. Geography was taught by the map. Periodically the whole school assembled in front of the map, and question and pointer were employed. 'One singular perversion,' says Thomson, 'I always made, and was never corrected for it. When the group of islands north of the Shetlands was indicated by the pointer I always shouted, "The Faraway Islands." This was my rendering of "Faroe."

'This school brought me under the influence of my father's sister Emily, who then lived in Abbotsford Place. As the school was a considerable distance from Pollok Street, I had lunch with my aunt, whose house was quite near the school. To her gentle integrity and loving wisdom I owe more than I can ever tell.'

An incident at this school may be mentioned as illustrating the suffering that may be thoughtlessly inflicted on a sensitive child. Thomson had done something which an older lad declared was a police offence, and that the policeman would haul the culprit off to prison—an awful prospect for a boy seven years old. Long afterwards the memory was still vivid. 'How that wretch tortured me on the sly!' He told the story at home and found relief.

'My next school,' he says, 'also kept by a Mr. Anderson, was held in a large hall. Here I began to learn Latin and French. These were taught by a

Dutchman, C. V. Junius, who had a furious temper. Punishments by him were not meted out with cane in "palmies" deliberately administered. He would burst into a transport of rage and cuff the offender with any book that was in his hand. One fellow had the knack of hunching up his shoulders and ducking his head under his collar. After Junius had delivered a series of ineffective blows he would emerge, smiling, with hair slightly ruffled. A lad whose turn to read had come excused himself for a drink. This was tolerated the first time. When his turn next came, he tried the same ruse. A dictionary from the master's hand came hurtling through the air and cut open his forehead. The scar remained as long as I knew him. From that time C. V. was required to take delinquents to Mr. Anderson. Long afterwards I learned that in private life C. V. was a most kindly and childlike man.'

In Anderson's Academy, as it was called, Thomson's interest in science was first aroused. Saturday was a holiday, but on that day, for those who cared to attend, Mr. Anderson carried out chemical and electrical experiments, and showed geological specimens. Only on Saturdays was a cupboard opened which contained all sorts of scientific oddments. A favourite experiment was to make oxygen from black oxide of manganese. It was put into a glass retort with some other material. It was heated by a spirit lamp set beneath, and the oxygen bubbled through water into a receiver. A quantity having been collected, a match that had been ignited and was still red was inserted, when it burst into flame again. Similarly he produced and tested carbonic acid gas, and the match applied to it was at once extinguished. There were experiments also with the air pump. Experiments producing

electric shocks always gave rise to shouts and shrieks of laughter. Among the geological specimens Thomson remembered 'a small ammonite, and a piece of petrified wood which must have been turned into flint by the action of hot sand.'

Mr. Anderson moved to another school where, after a period of success, he fell on evil days.

The last school of attendance at which Thomson has left any record was, as he says, 'like my first, in our own street. It was kept by a Mr. Mackenzie who had been a teacher in Madras Academy, St. Andrews. Here I entered more fully on the study of Latin.' But Mackenzie's knowledge of Latin and Greek was not profound. The subjunctive mood was never explained. The students were supplied with the words, and these were to be put into the correct tenses and cases, under rules. Thomson began at the same time Greek and French. He remembered an attempt to show that H (eta), the Greek long e, was formed by doubling the epsilon, the short e, thus, HH; omega was shown by the cursive form of the letter, which is also the oldest, to be formed by doubling omicron, and rubbing the top off, ω from ∞ .

Mr. Mackenzie lectured on Early French History, and the various Merovingian monarchs. The textbook used was White's *History of France*, which practically began with Charlemagne and the Carolingians. Of these shadowy monarchs Thomson retained a very incomplete idea until in after days he read a short history of the Middle Ages. History was one of his most abiding interests. In this school arithmetic was thoroughly taught. Mackenzie was also very strict in matters of spelling, a subject that receives less than its due of attention nowadays. He was a savage disciplinarian. His instrument of chastisement was

an indiarubber switch which, when it doubled round the hand, drew blood.

Thomson's share of education derived from the playground was got almost entirely here. To Mr. Anderson's school no playground was attached. Properly speaking, there was none here either ; but near by were great unbuilt spaces where the boys played rounders and cricket, and there friendships were cemented. 'Some of those,' he said long after, 'who are my friends to this day were met in Mackenzie's class-rooms. One especially I name, Ebenezer Russell, now famous as the author of the *Life of Maitland of Lethington*. He was easily the best scholar in the school. In Latin I was nearly his equal ; but in arithmetic he far outdistanced us all. Others were Nelson Bird, who became a writer and wine merchant ; and his brother, Robert Bird, a distinguished poet and writer on theological subjects, well known as the writer of a popular *Life of Christ* for children.'

Writing of those days, Mr. Russell says : 'We were both about ten years of age, with only a few days between our birthdays. We soon became close friends. John already showed something of that genius for friendship which was so characteristic of his later years. He was a very delicate boy, and in consequence very irregular in his attendance—a misfortune which interfered with his success in the two classes which alone he took ; though it did not prevent him from making progress in private. Along with other companions I was often invited to assist in lightening his days of confinement to the house. I was thus introduced to his mother, a gracious and accomplished lady, already for several years a widow, with John as her only surviving child. She soon became, and continued to the end of her long life to be, my ideal of a

Christian gentlewoman, thoughtful, refined, with literary tastes and talents, joined to very definite religious convictions which pervaded all her deportment, and which John early imbibed. She fostered the friendship between us; and when, a few years later, I left school for business, and Mrs. Thomson removed with her aged mother to Dennyloanhead, her native region, I was frequently their guest at holiday times. I shared John's rambles all over the neighbourhood among his relatives and friends. He was well known, and everywhere welcome for his lively humour, his love of fun, and his genuine kindness.'

As a result of the insanitary condition of the house and its surroundings referred to above, during his whole boyhood Thomson was never a complete month at school. His health was seriously undermined. On this account the family was ordered to move to the country. Mrs. Thomson heard of a vacant house in Dennyloanhead which, on inspection, promised to be suitable. It had been built by the Rev. Dr. Paterson of Kirkwall and his brother for their parents. When no longer required by them, it was let to Mrs. Thomson, and she took possession on the 25th of March 1856. There was a large garden. The townsboy vividly remembered in future days the impression made on him by the two hundred gooseberry bushes. In a small paddock annexed to it various crops were grown.

Thomson was now in his fifteenth year, keenly alert to all that was passing around him. One impression is worth preserving. He was accustomed to visit a family on the other side of the Forth and Clyde Canal. Returning home at night he had to cross the Canal by the service planks at the lock. 'I some-

times wonder,' he writes, 'at the risks I ran in those days. There was, however, one source of illumination which is considerably diminished now. To the east were the blazing furnaces of Carron and Falkirk; southward lay Airdrie, Coatbridge, Motherwell, and Gartsherrie; to the west was Glasgow. On calm nights the whole sky was lit up by the glare, reflecting the ruddy glow with marvellously brightening effect upon the landscape.'

Thomson found the religious life of the district strongly attractive. The United Presbyterian Church which they attended faced his home from the opposite side of the road. The congregation was old, and gloried in its origin as Anti-Burgher. Probably there are few now who know, and fewer still who care, much about the old Scottish ecclesiastical divisions; but they were momentous matters for our great-grandfathers. When the Secession fathers left the Church of Scotland as a result of the Marrow controversy, they did not long maintain their unity. They split on the question whether or not it was lawful for a church member to take the Burgess oath. The clause over which the debate waxed furious was as follows, viz.: 'Here I protest before God and your Lordships that I profess and allow with my heart the true religion presently professed within this realm, and authorized by the laws thereof; I shall abide thereat, and defend the same to my life's end, renouncing the Roman religion called Papistry.' The stricter section held that this meant approval of the Established Church, with all the corruptions that had driven them out of it; others declared that it meant only approval of the true religion itself, not the manner in which it was professed. So they parted company. The former, known as Anti-Burghers, pro-

ceeded to the extreme of unchuraching the others, who were called Burghers, because they did not regard as sinful the taking of the oath.

From these stern men no mercy was expected in the exercise of discipline, and certainly no mercy was shown. It is not easy in the genial atmosphere of to-day to realize those old conditions. Persons guilty of flagrant drunkenness or of immorality had to stand up as penitents and suffer rebuke in the face of the congregation. Equal severity was meted out to the sin of 'occasional hearing,' *i.e.* for attending the services of any other branch of the Scottish Church. Certain services were held preparatory to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Especially important was the Fast Day. The Parish Church had the legal right to fix the day to be observed as one of humiliation and prayer before the Communion. Burghers and Anti-Burghers made it a point of honour to show their disallowance of this claim by driving coals, etc., on the Parish Fast. What were called Tent Preachings were held in summer in the Parish Glebe, on the Fast Day, and also on the Sunday. Tent Preaching was a misnomer. There was no tent. The people sat on the grass. The officiating minister preached from a structure like a sentry-box.

It so happened that a member of the Dennyloanhead congregation was driving coal on the Parish Fast Day. Passing the Glebe where a Tent Preaching was going on, he 'lootet ower the dyke' to listen to an Auld Kirk sermon. He was promptly and severely rebuked for 'occasional hearing.'

The dog of another worthy followed himself and his wife on their way to church. As they passed the gate of the Established Church the dog rushed in after some canine friend. 'See,' cried the wife, 'the dog's

awa' into the Auld Kirk !' ' Weel,' said the uncompromising farmer, ' we'll shuit (shoot) him the morn.'

Dr. Thomson recalled another incident connected with the 'crime,' as the Seceders called it, of promiscuous dancing. A young woman charged with this offence was brought before the Session. Jenny stoutly maintained that she was 'thinkin' nae ill when she was dancin'.' ' Weel, Jenny, ma wumman,' said the old minister, ' ye should aye be dancin'.'

In the praise of the sanctuary, of course, only Psalms might be sung. The choice of tunes was strictly limited. A tune repeating the last line of the verse was described as 'a rant,' and might be sung by a precentor only at his peril. One grim elder, indeed, opined that there need be only one tune for Psalm-singing: the irregularities of short metre and long being met by 'ekin' an' takin' aff' !

Many changes had taken place before 1856. Burghers and Anti-Burghers had composed their differences and united in 1820, forming the United Secession Church. This body in turn united in 1847 with the Relief Church (which dated from 1761) to form the United Presbyterian Church. But the past had left its mark upon the people. Difficult and perplexing as Scottish Church History may prove to strangers, these humble folk had a clear grasp of the situation. 'Is that your kirk?' said a visitor to the wife of a villager when passing the United Presbyterian place of worship. 'Na, na,' was the disconcerting reply. 'Yon's oor kirk'—pointing to the Parish Church,—'this is just oor meetin' hoose.' The company worshipping in the 'meetin' hoose' had renounced no right, and had given up no interest in the National Zion. They were ready to resume their places in her the moment she

should be purged from the errors and abuses that had provoked their protest.

The church was to them an essential part of the very framework of life. In their devotion to it there was a peculiar warmth and intensity. Attachment to it was like membership in a family. This was probably all the stronger because of the network of relationships that enclosed the whole district. Take the following by way of illustration. A young minister had introduced certain new features into the service, greatly to the annoyance of some older folk. One ancient dame felt so keenly that she tackled the minister on the subject in the vestry. After hearing her out, he, not very tactfully, suggested that if she were not satisfied she might worship elsewhere. 'What!' she exclaimed with indignation. 'Div ye think I'll be pitten oot o' the kirk by the likes o' you?'

The very fabric and furniture were regarded as communal property in which individual rights were merged. A lady member was showing a visitor over the building, and drawing attention to bits of furniture in the vestry for the young minister's use. To guard against possible misunderstanding she added, 'But they're no' his, ye ken; they belang to the "body"'—by which term she designated the congregation.

In the matter of sermons the people liked good measure. The story is told of a farmer who, when the preacher let out a congregation in an hour and a half, went home by back roads and through the fields, lest any one meeting him should think he had not been at church! They also liked good quality, with a distinct preference for doctrinal discourses. The intellectual average was high, and doubtless this

had its influence in stimulating and developing the intelligence of the worshippers. They held strong views as to what was orthodox and what heretical, and they could be very dogmatic. This made them at times the object of playful banter. A local doctor who was, not without reason, suspected of laxity in his theological thinking, took an impish delight in teasing the old beadle, who, as became one in his position, was a staunch pillar of orthodoxy. He was overheard one day saying to John, after a lively argument, 'Aweel, John, at any rate, I don't believe in original sin.' 'Ye needna' worry about that,' John grimly responded. 'Ye hae eneuch o' awkwal (actual) thing to do your turn !'

'One of the elders,' says Dr. Thomson, 'was an old man over ninety, little, and, to use a Scots phrase, wizened, with piercing black eyes. He walked with a stoop. When he sat down, he put his hat with his handkerchief under his chair, and leaning his hands on his knees would speak as if to the ground beneath his feet. He had a way of translating Bible narratives into racy Scots, *e.g.* : "The Lord said to Sara, 'Wherefore didst oo leuch?' and Sara, 'A didna' leuch.' But the Lord said, 'Ye did sut leuch.'"' At the end of a sentence he would turn his face up and grin with his toothless gums, while his black eyes sparkled.'

Mention was made above of the network of relationships in the district. The congregation was formed largely of interlaced families. One result of this was that, in the words of a former minister's daughter, 'Ye canna' speak ill o' a body here but ye're daein' 't to their cousin at the farthest.' A cattle-dealer who thought he had been got the better of by a man in the district was inveighing against the delinquent to one who, he had learned, came from the same neigh-

bourhood, and wound up with, 'Ye'll maybe ken him.' 'I ken him weel eneuch,' was the reply, 'he's my faither.' Farmers formed the bulk of the congregation. They had not much money among their hands, but in other ways they were very generous to their ministers.

In those days the minister at Dennyloanhead was the Rev. James Stevenson, later known as the Rev. Dr. Stevenson of Leith. His brother, Mr. Hugh Stevenson, became tutor to John, and undertook the task of preparing him for the University. He also was ordained, and settled in the United Presbyterian Church at Melrose, in 1860. There he fulfilled a beautiful and faithful ministry, and died at a great age in 1916. At the celebration of his jubilee in 1909 Dr. Thomson, prevented by illness from attending, wrote a letter which was read at the meeting. It shows with what warm affection he remembered his old tutor through all the half-hundred years that had passed. 'I may well join,' he says, 'in your rejoicing, for I owe much to your pastor. For two years I was under his charge—two of the most impressible years of a boy's life, from fifteen to seventeen. To a great extent I owe him what knowledge of Latin and Greek I have. Important as is a knowledge of the Classics, I owe him much more. There was the subtle influence of a noble character. No one could come into such close contact with Mr. Stevenson as I did without learning instinctively to recognize that it is only noble to be good. It was not by speaking about goodness, but simply by being what he was—it was the grand, direct honesty of the man, his noble simplicity, that impressed more than words could have done. One thing I remember—the kindly, reverent way in which he would speak of goodness, however humble, and

his scorn of everything mean, however high. His scorn did not employ words; a tone, a set of the mouth, and the lesson was conveyed, yet the lips were not soiled with words of contempt. The educative worth of such association at my age cannot easily be estimated. If I have not realized a like noble life in my own, the fault is in me, not in him.'

That is written in the spirit of humility and generous appreciation of others which always characterized our friend. But it is evident that he was singularly fortunate in the scholarly attainments, and in the fine, rich personality of his teacher. In some measure he had already grasped the worth of true scholarship. There was no danger that he would ever belittle it, or fail to use all proper means for its acquirement. He had also learned to appreciate the greatest things, which lend value and significance to human life. In the choice of a career his mind turned decisively to the Ministry of the Gospel. It was no arbitrary choice. As with Timothy, the unfeigned faith of his grandmother and of his mother was reflected in his own. They encouraged him in his purpose, and his own heart inclined to the noblest calling. Thus prepared and equipped, he 'girt up the loins of his mind' and set out bravely for the University of his native city.

CHAPTER III

Glasgow University : Architecture, Personalities, and Student Life—Divinity Hall : Teachers and Students—Dialectics—Licence.

WHILE attending the University, Thomson had the good fortune to stay in the home of his gifted relatives, Alexander and George Thomson, presided over by his genial Aunt Emily, in Abbotsford Place. In the intimate intercourse of these years the foundation of his knowledge of Architecture was laid, a subject in which he retained a lively interest.

In the late 'fifties' of last century the University of Glasgow was still housed in the High Street. A line of two-storey buildings faced the street. The windows were ornamented with floreated pediments. A vaulted doorway opened into a narrow court. A Jacobean tower stood opposite the entrance, ornamented with imitations of the protuberances which marked many ancient keeps, with slits through which molten lead could be poured upon assailants. To the right was a massive stairway, with Lion and Unicorn on the first landing, guarding the approach to the Senate Room. The Divinity class-room was on the left. The Hebrew class-room, in front of which ran a colonnade, looked out upon the street. A second court was reached by an archway under the tower. Here were the class-rooms in the Faculties of Arts, Medicine, and Law ; and the Common Hall, facing the tower, in which many classes were also held.

The buildings on the east belonged to the early years of the nineteenth century, and reflected the influence of the then prevailing 'Adams' style. Beyond the Common Hall was a third court, with the Library on the south, the gable of a professor's house on the north, and on the east the Hunterian Museum. This last was a domed building of exceedingly beautiful proportions. Of the architect, William Stark, Sir Walter Scott observed that 'with him died more genius than was left behind in all the collected universality of Scottish Architects.' In the College Green behind the Museum, a rather dreary stretch of grass with a row or two of unhealthy-looking trees, Sir Walter located the duel between the cousins in *Rob Roy*. It was a popular drilling-ground in the early days of the Volunteer movement.

Well up in the tower stood a black bust said to represent Zachary Boyd, minister of the Barony Parish during the Protectorate, and a Lord Rector and Vice-Chancellor of the University. He left money to the College, with which the tower and three sides of the second court were built. Attached to the legacy was a condition that the College should publish his poetic version of the Scriptures. The Senate managed to get round the condition, and only some three copies of the work were printed. This was probably done in the interests of the author's reputation, for the alleged 'poetry' is of the frankly doggerel order. If this was so, the kindly purpose failed. A number of absurd couplets were attributed to him, and repeated from generation to generation. One of the most popular in Thomson's time was :—

' Jacob made for his son Josie
A tartan coat to keep him cosie.'

But Boyd's composition was not really worse than much of Bacon's acknowledged verse. Thus his lordship sings of the sea :—

‘ There did he set the great leviathan
Which made the deep to seeth like boiling pan.’

The tower was the reputed prison of the University in days when it had supreme power of pit and gibbet within its own boundaries. When Lord Kelvin (then Professor Thomson) experimented here on the elasticity of copper wire, Thomson was one of his student assistants, and took the opportunity of visiting all the rooms. Some were filled with anatomical models more or less damaged. One chamber was lighted only by unglazed slits in the wall. The floor was covered some inches deep with soot, dust, and lime. Confinement in such a cell in midwinter would have been punishment enough even for murder.

The approach to the College was through mean streets, narrow and squalid. Alike in buildings and surroundings, the University presented a striking contrast to its imposing successor on Gilmorehill. But a certain air of antiquity lent it a charm of its own. Hard by stood the stately pile of St. Mary's Cathedral. Not far off was the thatched cottage in which Darnley lay sick, whence he was lured by Mary Queen of Scots to his death at Kirk-o'-Field. Over the front buildings in Rotten Row there looked a ruined gable. This, according to local tradition, was all that remained of the Rectory, or Pedagogy, which in pre-Reformation days represented the later University. Certain customs still prevailed which linked the present with the distant past. Theoretically the city magistrates had no authority within the walls of the University ; the police in pursuit of a criminal might not enter

the precincts without express permission from the Senatus—a relic of the powers it exercised in the days of its founder, Pope Nicholas v. The brilliant scarlet gown worn by all undergraduates was a legacy from Bologna. The statutes of that University furnished the model for those of Glasgow. To appear without the gown was a punishable offence. In a bright new gown the novice stood confessed, attracting unwelcome attentions from lively seniors. Many devices were employed to dim the splendour, and second-hand gowns were highly popular.

In those days students matriculated in the Library, and then visited the professors under whom they were to sit during the session. Each professor collected his own class fees—a system happily now long obsolete. Thomson's first visit was to Professor William Ramsay, 'a ruddy-faced little man with a resounding cough,' who taught *Humanity*, i.e. Latin. He was a profound scholar and an impressive teacher. His most important book was his *Manual of Roman Antiquities*, which struggling and irreverent students were accustomed to call 'Ramsay's Iniquities.' In this class only Latin was spoken. Men used English at their peril. Some of the students were addicted to the rather disgusting habit of chewing tobacco. A student so occupied entered the room. The professor noticed, and challenged with '*Quid est hoc?*' '*Hoc est quid*' was the witty reply. The delinquent took his seat amid roars of laughter, in which the professor joined. The junior class met at 8 A.M., and again later in the day. The senior class also met twice daily, so the professor and his assistant, Taylor, 'a big, purple-faced man who was liable to be late for the early class,' were kept busy. To the seniors at the second hour Ramsay was accustomed to read some Latin author,

with a running commentary which from the fulness of his knowledge he made intensely interesting, and at times surprising. 'To hear him translate Plautus was a lesson not only in Latin but in English bargee vituperation.'

The next call made was upon Professor Law Lushington, a strikingly handsome man, with abundant rippling brown hair that fell in a cascade over the left of his forehead, about whom it is said there was 'a severe aloofness,' born of 'invincible shyness.' His subject was Greek, and his scholarship masterly. When applying for the Chair he was asked what Greek literature he professed. His answer, made with all modesty, was, 'I profess the Literature of Greece.' For the youthful mind there was round him also the halo of romance, for had he not married the sister of the poet Tennyson? Lushington's work lacked something in glow and colour; it was cold and exact: 'on his lips even Aristophanes became gentlemanly.' He was regarded with a certain awe by the raw youths who passed under his influence. 'Once in the confused *mêlée* of a snow battle an errant snowball hit Lushington. As if by magic the battle ceased. An awed silence fell on the combatants as if they looked for the heavens to fall.' There were three classes in Greek, junior, middle, and senior. Thomson was persuaded to take senior Latin and middle Greek. This he always regretted, as his training had not been such as to enable him to derive full benefit from these classes.

Of two other professors Thomson spoke with regretful but kindly tolerance. Professor Buchanan, known as 'Logic Bob,' taught Logic and Metaphysics. He seemed to regard the subjects as finally exhausted when he wrote his lectures on his appointment to the

professorship in the early 'thirties.' These he read faithfully to successive generations of students, apparently unaware that such men as Kant and Hegel ever lived, and only dimly conscious of the existence of Descartes. Professor Fleming was supposed to teach Moral Philosophy, but he is described as 'essentially puzzle-headed'—a strange qualification for the guide of youth in the perplexing path of ethics.

The young student made excellent progress in Mathematics, which remained, one might say, a hobby with him to the end of his days. He also developed a keen and abiding interest in Natural Philosophy, preserving a profound veneration for his old teacher, Lord Kelvin, in whose class he took high honours.

The reading-room in the Library was a somewhat dismal place, with dilapidated desks that had seen centuries of service. Uninviting as it was, Thomson spent much of his time here—to better purpose, he thought, than the hours passed in the classes. History specially attracted him. He speaks of the Library as the great source of his education. He made friends with the sub-librarian, who was in charge. This man was by way of being a poet. He had by him a volume of poems in manuscript, which Thomson was privileged to read. It consisted of *Lays of Ancient Greece*, composed in imitation of Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*. The good man was persuaded that he had greatly improved on his model, but publishers were marked by a strange perversity of judgment!

The surplus energies of students in the Scottish Universities find outlet periodically in the election of Lord Rector. The Lord Rectorship is a position mainly of honour, the chief responsibility involved being the delivery of an address to the students during its tenure. The Lord Rector is elected by the votes

of the students. The office is purely academic, but the budding politicians almost invariably make the election an occasion to test the strength of political parties in the University. During the contest the fun is fast and furious: not only the city where the particular battle rages, but many of the citizens are usually painted many colours. Perpetuating a mediæval custom, the students in Glasgow voted by what were called 'nations,' of which there were four: Natio Glottiana, composed of natives of Clydesdale; Natio Transforthana, or Albania, natives of northern counties; Natio Rothseiana, natives of the west of Scotland, Ireland, Canada, and U.S.A.; and Natio Loudoniana, natives of the eastern counties. The 'nations' varied greatly in size, the largest always being the Glottiana. As the successful candidate was elected by the majority of 'nations,' it sometimes happened that he had the support of only a minority of the students voting. Occasionally the voting resulted in a tie. Formerly the retiring Lord Rector, and later the Chancellor of the University, gave the casting vote. Thomson was not able to take any part in the physical turmoil of the elections, but he more than made up for this by his caustic and pungent contributions to the literature and battle-cries. These stirring events left with him many exhilarating memories.

University degrees were not then regarded as they are to-day. Many of the best students never sat a degree examination, and some who passed the examinations did not trouble to graduate. Thomson completed his Arts course, in which, despite his modesty, he had profited beyond most of his fellows. He had developed habits of study and methods of reading which, combined with his marvellous memory, gave

him a wide range of knowledge. He seemed never to forget anything he had once read. He studied with keen interest the most diverse subjects, and a characteristic of his information was its accuracy. To the surprise and delight of his friends he was always bringing apposite contributions from highly recondite sources. In his later days, when the present writer knew him best, it was not altogether a figure of speech to call him a 'walking encyclopædia.' Yet he left the University without attempting to take a degree. But for the stimulus supplied by his friend John Hutchison—the late John Hutchison, LL.D., Rector of the High School, Glasgow—he might never have thought of it. Hutchison, who was a year his junior in the Arts classes, soon achieved a distinguished place in Classical scholarship. Acquaintance between them deepened into intimacy, which in the Divinity Hall ripened into warm and lifelong friendship. Under Hutchison's influence, and with his assistance in Classics, Thomson prepared for and passed the examinations, graduating in due course Master of Arts.

The environment of Thomson's earlier days and the atmosphere in which he was trained were such as to give a serious bent to his mind. Sacred things were held in reverence, and religion was not a matter merely for times and seasons. It was the deepest and most real thing in life, controlling every department. Worship in the home and in the church was indeed a duty, but duty was forgotten in the sense of privilege. It brought refreshment to the spirit, and strength for daily tasks. There was nothing in it gloomy or morose; it was compatible with the sparkle and play of wit and humour, and with a keen relish for life's wholesome enjoyments. The holy

office of the ministry was regarded with unfeigned respect.

Thomson was not conscious of ever having passed through the spiritual experience called conversion. Love and loyalty to Jesus Christ, instilled into his heart in childhood, grew and strengthened with the years. For him Jesus Christ was 'the Saviour' first of all: He was also 'Lord' and 'Master.' With great humility and simplicity of purpose he sought to 'think Christ's thoughts after Him,' and to do His will. In choosing the ministry as a career he very truly gave himself, with all his gifts and powers, to the Master's service. With a grave sense of the solemnity of the step he was taking, he entered upon the study of Divinity.

The Theological Hall of the United Presbyterian Church was in Edinburgh, at No. 5 Queen Street. There was a large hall in which the Synod met annually. In other apartments was found house-room for Library, Committees, etc. The classes met each year only during August and September, holiday months in the city, when there were no meetings of Committees. For the rest of the year students were free to follow such callings as might enable them to earn a livelihood. This they did under supervision of the Presbyteries within whose bounds they resided. The full course consisted of five two-monthly sessions. The dignified leisureliness of a course extending over five years contrasts strongly with the somewhat feverish haste of our own time. The advantage in preparation for a life-work of ministering to the souls of men is not all with the modern system. No doubt some in those days fretted at the long delay in reaching their goal; but others turned to splendid use the opportunities offered for ampler reading and reflection.

Those who could afford it were able to attend such classes as they desired in the Universities. It led also to a closer acquaintance than is now possible between students and ministers of the Church, no doubt to their mutual profit.

In 1862, when Thomson entered the Hall, the professors were Doctors Eadie, Lindsay, M'Michael, and Harper. Each of them was in full charge of a congregation, and was set free for the professorship only during the two months' session. The students of the first two years formed what was called the Junior Hall. They were under Professors Eadie and Lindsay. Eadie was tall and handsome in person. He preserved in a remarkable degree his youthfulness in both appearance and spirit. Frank and genial in disposition, with a gift of kindly humour, he greatly won the confidence and affection of the students. He taught Hebrew, New Testament Greek, Biblical Criticism, Hermeneutics, and Apologetics. That full justice could be done to these subjects in the brief time at his disposal—about three weeks to each—was of course impossible. But he possessed the power of rousing the interest of his students in their work, and his influence was eminently stimulative. It was no small thing to be in contact with one of his acknowledged scholarship, who had examined at first hand the ancient uncial codices, who had discussed questions of Criticism with Tregelles, and who, later, was appointed a member of the committee of scholars who revised the translation of the New Testament.

Dr. Lindsay lacked Eadie's geniality and approachableness. The Rev. J. S. Scotland of Newport, Fife, a fellow-student of Thomson's, describes Lindsay as 'a gentleman, a scholar, and a saint.' It is recorded of him that 'he had noticeable blue eyes—how they

used to kindle when he was enforcing an argument or sending home a truth !' He taught Exegetical Theology. All his work was marked by extreme carefulness and accuracy. His conscientious earnestness, and his evident sense of responsibility in the discharge of his sacred calling, deeply impressed the minds of his youthful hearers.

The Senior Hall consisted of third, fourth, and fifth year students, under the charge of Professors Harper and M'Michael. Dr. Harper was the senior, and to him subsequently was given the title of Principal. 'He was stern,' says Mr. Scotland, 'scrupulously just and honourable, and cast in the Covenanting mould. Had he lived in the "killing times," he would almost certainly have formed one of the glorious army of martyrs.' He was a man of goodly presence, with fine, clean-cut features of the Roman type ; and he possessed a singularly beautiful, clear voice. Unfortunately he knew nothing of modulation, and that voice soon became monotonous to distraction for those who sought to follow his lectures. Possibly the reading of the same lectures year after year had a deadening effect upon himself. Attention in the class gave place to lassitude and frank carelessness. Some indulged artistic instincts, drawing humorous sketches in their note-books ; some wrote up their notes of other lectures ; some put in the hour with novels or such light literature. Systematic Divinity and Pastoral Theology were his subjects. For the latter he expounded the Pastoral Epistles, and took occasion to give the students much excellent, if platitudinous, advice. High-spirited youths grew restive under him, and Davidson, the 'Scottish Probationer,' spoke for more than himself when he exclaimed impatiently, 'I wonder for what sin in what past state of existence

we are compelled to endure this !' ' Beneath his stern exterior,' says Mr. Scotland, ' there beat a warm and truly tender heart ' ; and in his later years he greatly mellowed. He had a son, John, who was studying for the ministry, a young man of marked ability but of delicate health. His father believed him to be called of God to the work of the ministry. Alas ! John was never able to finish his course, and carried his father's bright hopes with him to an early grave.

Dr. M'Michael was minister of a charge in Dunfermline. As a student he had won distinction as a mathematician. He was a man of wide culture, of a truly reverent spirit, and he possessed the saving gift of humour. He suffered from a slight defect in his vocal organs, and had developed a curious and amusing habit of supplementing his talk with ' yes, ay,' ' ye ken,' and ' p'raps ' (perhaps). Mr. Scotland vouches for the following story. Darwin with his theory of the Origin of Species was then in great vogue. In one of his conversational lectures the doctor remarked, ' There are some gentlemen in these days, ye ken, who seem anxious to make out that their grandfathers were monkeys, yes, ay. Well, of course, one ought to know best who his own grandfather was ; but for ourselves we disown the connection ! ' On one occasion the professor practically concussed young Scotland into addressing a Mothers' Meeting. A sermon on the Fatherhood of God had to do duty in the emergency. Reporting on the performance to his wife and a lady friend, the Doctor said that the young man had done well, adding, ' He spoke to them as if he had been a father for twenty years, yes, ay.'

Dr. M'Michael greatly disliked the Gothic churches which at that time were in considerable favour. He found the acoustics trying in such a church as that

of his colleague, Eadie, at Lansdowne. They were designed for Roman Catholic, and were not at all suited for Protestant, worship. ‘Bezaleel, the architect of the Tabernacle, drew his inspiration from above (pointing upwards); the modern architects drew theirs from a very different quarter (pointing downwards).’

Church History, as treated by Dr. M’Michael, centred in the great controversies regarding the Trinity, Redemption, the Sacraments, and Church Government. A vivid portrayal of the leading personalities in each controversy, and of the part they played, with the human interest thus aroused, lent a singular attractiveness to his lectures. Of real practical value to the students was the guidance given as to methods of meeting cavillers and objectors, and the repertory of telling answers furnished to possible and actual opponents of the faith. ‘His most striking peculiarity,’ says Dr. Thomson, ‘was a way of inserting “p’raps” amid his remarks, out of all connection. It certainly would have been disturbing had any one but he, after summing up the argument for the Divinity of our Lord, added a remark into which a “p’raps” was so awkwardly introduced as grammatically to throw doubt on the preceding argument. It is said that at his marriage he qualified his acceptance of the lady with his inevitable “p’raps.” But the good man’s oddities and eccentricities seemed only to endear him the more to the students, who, for his genial humanity, took him to their hearts.’

Candidates for entrance to the Divinity Hall produced evidence that they had taken the University classes included in the Arts curriculum, and had to pass an examination in the subjects thus studied. The standard required was not very high. From this examination those who had taken the M.A. degree

were exempt. But all alike were examined in Hebrew, New Testament Greek, Bible Knowledge, and Personal Religion. The professors being satisfied, the Presbyteries also had to be assured that the would-be entrants were suitably equipped as to scholarship, and that their character and conduct were in harmony with their profession.

There were thirty-one students in 'Our Year,' as Thomson affectionately called the members of his class in the Hall. His genius for friendship was soon in evidence, and he was speedily on terms of intimacy with them all. His old friend, Rev. W. B. R. Wilson of Dollar, who was a junior when Thomson was a senior, recalls impressions of that time. 'It was our habit, when we got out for an interval at the close of one of our professors' lectures, to assemble under the trees in Queen Street and walk and talk with eager zest in little groups. I can still in imagination see Thomson in those days, holding forth in the middle of the group of seniors, pressing his arguments with all the fire and verve that were so conspicuous and characteristic features of every conversation in which he took part; and I can still hear his laugh of triumph as he made a successful point, or closed an unusually happy repartee. He was one of the most picturesque figures among the students of that period. For, though not tall in stature, with a slight frame, and never robust in constitution, there was an amazing vitality and energy about him that was continually radiating in a brilliant, not to say explosive, fashion. In every company in which he appeared he was sure even then to make himself prominent, and often, indeed, he became the oracle of the group. I could see and understand this from afar as I looked on at some of those open-air discussions that enlivened our

welcome spell of leisure in those summer sessions of the ancient time.'

The Theological Society, open to all students in the Hall, offered a splendid arena for the exercise and development of Thomson's particular gifts. Views and theories were freely aired and thrashed out in an atmosphere of youthful enthusiasm. Defective knowledge and faulty logic were handled with ruthless frankness, in perfect good nature. The discipline for mind and temper was of great value. While not lacking in constructive thought, Thomson shone in critical analysis. Anything slipshod in argument, or wrong in fundamental assumptions, was relentlessly exposed. Whatever savoured of pretentiousness or bombast received its due. Apposite illustrations drawn from his wide reading lit up most of his speeches. Already were manifest the intellectual strength and integrity, the mental alertness and the nimbleness of wit that characterized his contributions to later controversies, especially in the field of Biblical Criticism. His enthusiasm sometimes led him to make extreme statements; but they were free from all personal animus. No one who really knew Thomson ever took umbrage at his shrewdest thrusts.

The Missionary Society supplied an essential element in the life of the College. It fostered the Missionary spirit that became so marked and honourable a feature of the United Presbyterian Church. The Society chose annually one of the Church's Missions, or some object connected with it, for advocacy. The students went out two and two, and were welcomed by many congregations, to whom they stated the claims of the particular Mission, and received a collection on its behalf. The part he took in the work of the Association doubtless stimulated Thomson's interest in this

great branch of the Christian enterprise, which later bore fruit in his own offer for service in the Holy Land.

Nothing more precious, perhaps, was carried away from the Hall than the friendships there formed, which remained a source of joy and strength through all the remaining years of life. Among the most intimate were the Rev. Thomas Dunlop of Bootle, whose Biography Thomson wrote; Dr. John Hutchison, Rector of the High School, Glasgow; the Rev. J. S. Scotland, Newport, Fife; Rev. Dr. John Morison, Rosehall Church, Edinburgh; Rev. Peter Russell, Ollaberry, Shetland; and Rev. William Huie, Bridge of Teith. Rev. W. B. R. Wilson of Dollar was, as we have seen, junior to Thomson. He was subsequently admitted to the goodly fellowship.

The end of the session was signalized by a social meeting, when pleasant speeches were made and farewells taken: whereupon the company separated, probably never again all to meet together on earth. Most of the men found settlements in Scotland. Some went far afield: to India, to the Continent, and elsewhere. It was Thomson's pleasure to keep in touch with them all as far as possible. 'There was no one of "Our Year,"' writes Dr. John Morison, 'who had a more brotherly spirit, or who followed us in after life with such interest and, I may say, affection.' Mr. Scotland says that 'it was mainly due to him that "Our Year" met and celebrated at a social function in Edinburgh their semi-jubilee, twenty-five years after finishing their course at the Hall in 1867. Twelve of the original members sat down to dinner. Seven had passed away.' Many of the brethren were addicted to writing poetry. Thomson himself wielded no mean skill in verse. But by common consent the

foremost 'singers' were 'Tom Dunlop' and J. S. Scotland. Mr. Scotland sends two verses from a poem written for the occasion by Tom Dunlop—'lovable and beloved, who had in him a strain of genius.' Subject and treatment are alike significant :—

'Great critics, modern, wise and zealous,
Those plodding, puffy, German fellows,
Winnow with philosophic bellows
The Gospel grain;
And lo! no better mead, they tell us,
Than husks remain.

'But, good or ill wind blaw its worst,
Blaw Learning till its haffets burst,
Blind rage revile with lips accurst
God's word of grace—
More pure, more vital than at first,
It holds its place.'

Scotland was requested to reply in kind to Dunlop's epistle. Two stanzas from his poem show in what kindly recollection the old professors were still held in this pleasant brotherhood :—

'Dear, honoured fathers! noo at rest,
Asleep upon the Master's breast,
You loved an' served.
By grace you kept the good old paths,
An' never swerved.

'An' we, wha aince sat at yer feet,
Fed wi' the finest o' the wheat—
Nae modern chaff—
Wad keep the strecht an' narrow way
Wi' pilgrim staff.'

During later years in their Edinburgh home Dr. and Mrs. Thomson were accustomed at Assembly time to entertain the survivors of 'Our Year' to dinner. These were occasions of heart-warming fellowship; all the more, perhaps, as the numbers grew pathetically

fewer. On the 22nd of July 1921 Thomson wrote to Mr. Scotland : ' I have just been calculating that next month it will be fifty-nine years since you and I met in Queen Street Hall—you and I, the most delicate-looking of the thirty-one. Peter Russell also was delicate.' The other members of the surviving quintette were Doctors John Hutchison and John Morison. Two years later the five were reduced to four by the departure of him who had been from the first the life and soul of all their gatherings.

As the work of the Hall ended each year in September, Thomson was free to spend the winter at the Free Church College and the University Theological Hall in Glasgow. Here he developed an interest in Semitic studies, in which he was destined to win such distinction. He often spoke of the debt he owed to Professor Weir, who then taught the Hebrew class in the University—the father of Dr. T. H. Weir, the present Lecturer in Arabic. In due season Thomson graduated Bachelor of Divinity.

His home being within the bounds of Falkirk United Presbyterian Presbytery, he applied to that body for licence, and was taken on ' trials.' The ' trials' included examination by members of Presbytery in the Hebrew Bible and Greek New Testament, in Church History and General Divinity. Ministers were not all studiously disposed. Amid the distractions of a pastoral charge scholarship was often not a vital interest. The examination of students was therefore not seldom perfunctory. It might almost be assumed that the student knew the work better than the examiners. But a sermon and lecture had to be prepared and submitted to the Presbytery for judgment ; and of these both ministers and elders considered themselves competent critics. By direction of the examiner, Thomson

read part of his sermon to the Presbytery. An old elder, being asked for his opinion, thought it would do, adding, 'It was verra serious, ocht I heard o' 't.' The lecture, however, which was scholarly in character, roused the fears of a somewhat pietistic ministerial member, who observed, 'The Lord has no need of unsanctified learning.' Like a flash came the student's rejoinder: 'And He has less need of unsanctified ignorance!'

The Presbytery was well pleased with his appearance. He was accordingly licensed to preach the Gospel, and set apart in prayer for the duties of the sacred office, on the 5th of February 1867.

CHAPTER IV

Probationer—Hope deferred—Dark Days—‘Baffled and Defeated’—Not a Failure.

IN the Scottish Churches the student does not reach full ministerial status on receiving the Presbytery's licence. By courtesy he is thereafter addressed as ‘Reverend,’ and usually adopts ordinary clerical attire. In the pulpit he wears the gown, but not the bands; he preaches, but he may not dispense sealing ordinances—*i.e.* he may not administer the Sacraments. He is regarded as on probation for the high calling. Not until a congregation, recognizing his gifts as suited to their needs, ‘calls’ him—*i.e.* invites him to become their minister—is he ordained by the Presbytery to the Holy Office of the Ministry, and inducted to the pastoral charge.

In the United Presbyterian Church the names of students licensed by Presbyteries passed automatically on to a ‘List’ of Probationers kept by a Committee of Synod. It was the duty of this Committee to send the probationers, as nearly as possible in rotation, to preach in vacant charges, and also to act as supply. Men were kept on the ‘List’ for six years. At the end of that time, if they had not found a settlement, their names were automatically dropped. The Committee took no further responsibility, but might still give preaching appointments to such men when this did not interfere with the rights of those still on the ‘List.’

Appointments to a vacancy were generally for two consecutive Sundays. The preacher was entitled to the 'talent,' or fee, the amount of which varied in different congregations, and to hospitality for at least the intervening week. There were good reasons for this arrangement. It secured a certain amount of pastoral service for the vacant congregation, and furnished ampler material for a judgment as to the probationer's suitability. Again, when the journey was long and travelling costly, the fee was not always correspondingly high: so this plan meant a saving for the preacher, who otherwise would have been left with little after paying his expenses. There is an authentic story of a probationer who afterwards achieved high distinction in the Church. He travelled a considerable distance, preached morning and evening, and was given a 'talent' of one guinea. On reaching home he sent the treasurer a receipt in the following terms:—

To travelling expenses	.	.	£0	16	0
To two sermons at 2/6	.	.	0	5	0
			<hr/>		
			£1	1	0
Received from Treasurer	.		£1	1	0
			<hr/>		

Signed

The years of probationership must have been to many the most trying of their lives. Their time was spent largely in travel from place to place. They certainly saw much of their native land, the misty islands of the north, the wrathful firth and dangerous straits, the beauty and majesty of remote and lonely districts unknown to the tourist. They met with a rich variety of human nature in the houses where they found entertainment. But when success came with

laggard steps, when hope deferred sickened the heart, it was not always easy to preserve the mood and habit of study. Amid such disturbing conditions only enthusiasm for learning, or a very strenuous will, could enable a man to pursue the scholarly life.

Thomson entered on this experience with a hopeful heart. His intellectual gifts were of a high order. He had been a diligent student. Unable, owing to physical weakness, to take the part others did in outdoor sports and occupations, he concentrated the more upon reading and study. His was therefore an unusually well-furnished mind. His easy command of his knowledge, and his readiness in its use to illumine any topic of conversation, together with his geniality of spirit, made his presence welcome in any company. Prone to argument, and keen for dialectic victory, he was very chivalrous in his treatment of opponents. His ability commanded the respect, and his brotherliness the affection of his contemporaries.

Information is scanty regarding those years, especially in the early 'seventies.' We can do little more than trace his wanderings, and the subjects of which he treated. He was candidate for vacancies indeed ; but he seems never to have forgotten that he was an ambassador of Jesus Christ, charged with the preaching of His Gospel. At Brechin he was thrilled to meet a man who had lived in the house of Hugh Miller while the stone-mason was writing *My Schools and Schoolmasters*. At St. Andrews he had the pleasure of hearing Professor Flint preach on Ps. cxix. 18, a 'splendid sermon, developing the universality of divine law as I have tried to do.' In Dundee he made the acquaintance of George Gilfillan, and formed a deep friendship with that forceful genius. At Tayport he met with 'A. K. H. B.,' and

appears to have thoroughly enjoyed 'an amusing and gossip talk.' In Glasgow we find him staying with his old friends, the brothers Bird, one of whom, Robert, is known the world over as the writer of *Jesus the Carpenter of Nazareth*. He attends an evangelistic meeting of which he very honestly writes, 'Did not care for S—— at the time, but liked him on remembrance.' He preached for Dr. Robertson of Irvine, and was greatly cheered by that good man's commendation. Later, when Robertson moved to Bridge of Allan, the two were upon very intimate terms. You might see Thomson copying down poems to Robertson's dictation, or Robertson listening as a pleased and interested auditor as Thomson read something of his own. In Glasgow he hears a lecture by Haweis, of which he remarks, 'Great fun: more than anything else.' He paid several visits to the Orkneys, and experienced to the full the delays and perils of crossing the treacherous straits between the islands. One time or other he must have preached to every congregation of the Church there. At Shapinshay the local schoolmaster invited him to tea. When he turned up on the appointed day and hour he found that his host had forgotten all about it! There he learned that within the memory of some still living then, Christmas had been kept with as strict abstinence from all work as marked the observance of the Sabbath. We find forgatherings at Kirkwall, the centre from which the band of preachers went out, of such congenial spirits as Kidd, Kirkwood, Sellars, Primrose, Melville, and others. Evenings not soon to be forgotten were spent in discussing most things within the range of human knowledge. Here he records being wakened early on a foggy morning by the sound of gun-fire, and a band playing the

'Dead March.' It was the burial of a man-of-war's man. It was very characteristic of him that in the midst of his journeyings 'from island unto island' he remembered to purchase and send off valentines to a number of his little girl friends. However busily engaged, he contrived to find time for study. In addition to English authors, we find him busy with such writers as Schiller, Goethe, Hegel, and Malebranche. During this period, also, he gave much attention to Hebrew and Aramaic, finding recreation in his favourite pastime of sketching.

At Ardersier he notes the coming of an old woman to thank him for his sermon. At Leith Lumsden he walked out and enjoyed a long chat with two old women who had been gathering sticks in a neighbouring wood. As he approached he heard one remark upon the fineness of the weather. Her companion replied, 'Far better than we deserve, *puir sinfu' creyturs*.' Visiting Helensburgh, where he met his friend John Hutchison and others, after 'a very happy evening' the puritan in him reflects 'perhaps just too rollicking for a Saturday evening.'

Throughout those years, however, there is no disguising of the truth that failure to obtain a charge burdened his spirit and darkened many an hour. Not, indeed, that his services were unappreciated, for he had many welcome tokens to the contrary. But the most tantalizing failure is that which almost touches success. It was his lot to know too well what this means. Time and again he missed election by the narrowest margin, and moved steadily forward from disappointment to disappointment. In this frustration of his hopes he had enough to bear. But his mother's mortification at the world's failure rightly to value her son could not be altogether concealed, and



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this reacted painfully upon his sensitive spirit. In a letter to the present writer, Dr. John Hutchison says : ' His poor old mother was terribly disappointed at his never getting a call to a fixed congregation. On more than one occasion in Allan Park, when we were quite alone—Thomson being employed somewhere out of the house—she poured forth her soul to me at the success of some very ordinary youths, while her son, on whom so much care and training and expense had been laid out, was left alone with her to cultivate the garden. Poor old lady ! I used to be very vexed for her.' [Note the Scottish use of 'vexed.']

A brave face was presented to the world, for he would at all costs escape the humiliation of patronizing pity. But that we may understand the bitterness of the trial through which he passed, we may venture to lift the veil a little way, and reveal some of his most intimate thoughts as recorded in his diary. On December 31st he writes : ' On the whole, this year has been the most disastrous of any that I have yet passed through.' He refers to a series of disappointing things. ' O God, grant that next year may not be so unmitigatedly black.' Very humbly he seeks to understand the meaning of it all. ' Some of the things I can see even now are for the best : enable me so to see all.' Again, at the close of another year he observes that it has been remarkable ' only for its unvarying round of disappointments.' One congregation seemed likely to turn his way, but the efforts against him of two doctors of divinity and a contemporary of his own extinguished his hope. Of S—— he writes : ' A man named H——, a preacher, made himself busy, and ruined my chances there.' Then, somewhat pathetically, he remarks : ' It is indeed strange that I should be the mark of envious people,

as if I had won anything.' But some natures cannot resist the temptation to kick a man when he is down.

' Baffled and defeated on every hand, it is difficult not to give up altogether. Were it not for a faith, that is sometimes faint, that God is our Father, and will suffer no ultimate evil to befall us, I must have despaired. Add to this that every defeat visibly pulls my mother down nearer her grave. O Lord, let me see thy merciful lovingkindness, let me taste something of the pleasure of success. I have suffered long from the pain of hope deferred, and realized how sick it makes the heart.'

He is not unmindful of the 'mercy mingled with judgment'; of the circle of intimates and relations unbroken during the year; of worldly substance preserved while loss has been the portion of others; and he continues: 'I have not been permitted to dishonour God openly by sinning against Him in the eyes of men; for which I the more sincerely thank thee, O God, that, had my plans been carried out in some instances, I should not have been able to resist evil.'

If we bear in mind the circumstances here indicated, we shall be able to appreciate the magnanimity of the man in an action which he was led to mention to the present writer in the course of an intimate conversation. It is unlikely that he spoke of it to others, as it might seem to savour of boasting, which his soul abhorred. With regard to one vacancy he was well assured of success; but learning the necessitous circumstances of the man who stood second in the favour of the congregation, he forthwith caused his name to be withdrawn, and cleared the way for his rival's election. It was an act of chivalry not easily to be matched.

From the fact that Thomson was never settled in a

regular charge it might be too easily inferred that he failed in his profession. In those days the numbers of young men entering the ministry were greater than they have been in recent years. A wider choice was open to congregations. Then, as now, the possession of what are called ‘popular gifts’ was a surer passport to speedy success than the less showy but more solid attainments of the student. Many of the most eminent and influential men of the past generation, who brought to the Church signal contributions of sacred learning and wise statesmanship, had to endure long years of hardship in the wilderness as probationers before reaching the vantage ground of a ministerial charge. Had they lost heart and turned to other vocations, it would have been greatly to the impoverishment of the Church. In the face of his continual disappointments the advisability of taking up literature as a calling did more than once present itself to Thomson’s mind, and received careful consideration. While he was still undecided he wrote a novel entitled *According to Scots Law*. The publishers to whom it was submitted wrote appreciatively of the work, especially of its style, but they were not prepared to take the risk of issuing it. In any case, his heart was too deeply pledged to the ministry to make any change easy. So we find him writing: ‘Meantime I purpose still to serve in the Church, and there to do what in me lies to the improvement of the Church as an organization, and the better interpretation of its history, and of the word of God, which is its source.’ He does not rule out the possibility that he may have to devote himself to literature; but the hour was not yet, even when he wrote: ‘At times it almost seems as if I should say “total eclipse.” O God, send forth Thy light and Thy truth.’

Now and then in later years Thomson would recall those old, dark days of struggle and baffled hopes, and musingly wonder if his career had not after all been a failure. But in the kindly light that had broken upon his life God made him, like Joseph, to 'forget all his toil.' Free from the claims and exacting duties that crowd the ordinary minister's day, he devoted himself to the ministry of helping others, especially young men and lads looking forward to one or other of the learned professions. He needed not to be anxious to 'keep the wolf from the door,' and so found leisure to pursue special lines of study, by which he was enabled to make contributions of permanent value to the theological literature of his time. Above all, the triumph of character over adverse circumstances was never more brightly illustrated. Despite the stern buffetings of fortune, the sweetness of his nature remained unsoured, and the radiance of his genial spirit unclouded to the end.

CHAPTER V

Candidate for Professorship—Fergus Ferguson Case—Thomson's Championship.

IN 1872 Thomson was a candidate for the vacant chair of Moral Philosophy in M'Gill College, Montreal. In support of his candidature he issued a brochure on New Testament Psychology, or The Relations of Spirit, Soul, and Body. It took the form of a review of three recently published volumes: Delitzsch's *Biblical Psychology*, Herd's *Tripartite Nature of Man*, and Wright's *Fatherhood of God*. He seeks first of all a clear definition of terms, and proceeds to show the necessity for a correct understanding of the constitution of man, to which Christianity is addressed. He then discusses, with much learning and great independence, the whole subject as dealt with by the three authors named. He finds himself most in agreement with Delitzsch, but his criticisms are acute and well reasoned, while his own views are stated and defended with remarkable ability. The width of his reading is evidenced by the use he makes of writers from Plato and Aristotle to Kant, Hegel, and Herbert Spencer.

The appointment was given to another, but Thomson had shown that his claim to recognition rested on solid attainment. To complete his equipment he attended the classes of Moral Philosophy and Metaphysics, under Professors Calderwood and Fraser, in the University of Edinburgh during the next session,

1872-1873, when he achieved high distinction, being awarded the medal in each of these classes.

During the year 1875 Thomson served as assistant to the Rev. Fergus Ferguson, in Dalkeith. The close fellowship with this remarkable man thus begun was one of the most precious things in the young probationer's life. Ferguson was a man of commanding intellect and reverential spirit: a student earnest in his search for truth, and perfectly fearless in proclaiming it. Dr. Joseph H. Leckie has given us a picture of him as he was at the age of twenty-two, when, in 1864, he was ordained to the ministry of Dalkeith. 'He looked a great deal younger than his years. Indeed, until nearly the end of a long life he maintained an aspect of youthfulness, insomuch that at the time of his Trial, when he was aged forty-five, he was commonly referred to by speakers as "our young brother." Heretics have very often been men of engaging personality, and certainly Fergus Ferguson was singularly prepossessing in appearance, in bearing, and in character. He had a most winning grace of manner, and was able to inspire an almost romantic affection in the minds especially of younger men. His countenance was in its expression and cast of feature both strong and comely; and his grey eyes looked out upon the world with a benevolent, but keen, regard. Interested as he was in his fellow-men, widely human in his sympathy, and tenacious in his friendships, he yet lived for the world of ideas; and whatever time was left him from the cares of a busy pastorate was devoted to continuous study. Philosophy and theology were the engrossment of his entire career.' ¹

¹ J. H. Leckie, D.D., *Fergus Ferguson, D.D.: His Theology and Heresy Trial*, pp. 54 f. (T. and T. Clark.)

Under a quiet and unassuming exterior there lay a will of tempered steel. In all matters affecting righteousness and honour he was inflexible. A characteristic story is told of him in his early days, when, after leaving school, he had to seek work for a time. "At first," writes his son, the Rev. James Ferguson, B.D., Crieff, "he was fortunate in having for his master a good man who trained him well; and if his next experience of business life was less happy, it at least revealed the moral sensitiveness, the unhesitating decision and scorn of consequence that were characteristic of him throughout his career. One day he was told to do something that in his opinion verged upon dishonesty; he declined to do it. 'You must either do this or go,' declared his employer. 'That,' answered Ferguson, 'is an alternative that does not require a moment's consideration.' He put on his hat and walked out to the street." ¹

'This gallant youth,' says Dr. Leckie, 'who went forth into the street not deeming a dishonourable alternative to require a moment's consideration, was the same man who in after years proposed to resign a great pastorate because he felt his integrity to be compromised, and who before Presbytery and Synod witnessed, at much personal sacrifice, a good confession.'

Not long after his settlement in Dalkeith Ferguson brought a veritable wasps' nest about his ears by a trenchant criticism in his own pulpit of the fulsome praise commonly bestowed on the character of Robert Burns. This storm blew over only to find him faced with more threatening skies. A cantankerous elder in his own Session complained to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, first, that Ferguson gave his contribu-

¹ Leckie, *ibid.*, p. 49.

tions for religious purposes in the way followed by other members of the congregation, ignoring the box placed in the vestry for his special use ; and second, that in preaching on Christ's descent into Hades (1 Pet. iii. 18-20) he had taught that salvation was possible beyond the grave, and that even the fallen angels would all be restored to their first estate.¹

The absurd complaint about the collection box received the short shrift it deserved. It was practically laughed out of court, and the complainer covered with ridicule. But the second complaint, raising definitely the question of an intermediate state, was taken seriously. We cannot here follow the case through its windings in Presbytery and Synod. Ferguson took the words indicated in their plain meaning, as every honest interpreter is bound to do. In this he was in harmony with the tradition of the Early Church, but in collision with the views of many respected fathers and brethren in the Church of his own time. He was taken at some disadvantage in being called to defend a position all the implications of which he had not yet had time to think out. But with men of giant intellect, expert dialecticians, ranged against him, Ferguson conducted his case with striking ability and skill. In the result he was persuaded to sign four propositions that seemed to contradict his teaching. Although often reproached with this in after years, Ferguson himself did not so interpret them. He had guarded himself against misrepresentation by accompanying his acceptance of them with the assertion : ' I still hold all the interpretations of Scripture given by me from the pulpit,

¹ J. H. Leckie, D.D., *Fergus Ferguson, D.D. : His Theology and Heresy Trial*, pp. 59 f. (T. and T. Clark.)

and understand that my liberty as a minister of the Gospel to speak according to my own light, conscience, and sense of responsibility remains unimpaired.' ¹

It is unwise to formulate doctrinal propositions in an atmosphere of controversy such as then prevailed. The document in question bears ample evidence of the anxiety of its authors to discover some formula by which the peace of the Church might be preserved, without attempting to reconcile the logical contradictions manifest in its faith. Evidently compromise was all that was hoped for. But the case was of importance, not only as it affected the Church or an individual. Dr. Leckie has shown that Ferguson was the exponent of a wide movement of thought, and the precursor of later theological developments in which he was himself to bear a toilsome part. He led the way to a consideration of the last things, to a widening of the theological outlook, and assertion of liberty of thought from which this generation has reaped untold advantage.

No man had a greater contempt for mere notoriety than Ferguson; but when Thomson became associated with him in 1875 his name was familiar throughout Scotland and much farther afield. His congregation had stood loyally by him during the period of trial, and apparently were ready to go into the wilderness with him, had that been his fate. Their relations were those of mutual understanding and affection. The rich personality of the older man laid its spell upon the younger; and Ferguson found in Thomson a scholarship and devotion which he greatly valued. A wide field of common interests formed the basis of an acquaintance that rapidly grew into a strong and

¹ Leckie, *ibid.*, p. 79.

lasting friendship. There were many long and memorable country walks, when minister and assistant talked over texts and possible sermons, new books and magazine articles, the conversation easily drifting into the profundities of Theology and Philosophy. Perfect agreement in all things was not to be expected. They differed in type of mind. Ferguson, mystical, reflective, constructive, contrasted with Thomson, acute and brilliant in analysis, but not so strong in synthesis. They were in large measure complementary. During that year few of the great subjects then agitating the minds of men can have remained undiscussed. Thomson ever spoke gratefully of the influence Ferguson had exercised upon his mind, and of suggestions which had opened to him many fruitful lines of work. He then gained that insight into Ferguson's system of thought, and that sympathetic understanding of his positions, which made him the doughty and effective champion of his friend in future days of stress.

The work in Dalkeith proved very agreeable, although frequently interrupted by preachings in vacancies of which nothing came. After consultation with Ferguson he opened a class for young people, and found in it a congenial sphere for his energies. He was always happier in teaching than in preaching. Contact with the youthful mind had a stimulating effect upon him, leading to a fuller use of his intellectual riches. There was an eager response to his work, and there are some who yet have kindly memories of the evenings spent in his Bible Class.

By the end of 1875 there were rumours that a congregation in Glasgow had set its affections upon the famous minister in Dalkeith. Ferguson confided to his young friend that if the call were put in his

hands he would be inclined to accept it. On March 16, 1876, he was inducted to the pastoral charge of Queen's Park Church in that city. There he exercised a notable ministry. While performing with fidelity and success the duties of an influential city pastorate, his theological studies were pursued with unflagging diligence. As his own system of thought grew to maturity and completeness, he felt increasingly how unsatisfactory was the relation of the Church to her Creed. And so he was led into a second conflict with accepted dogma, no longer on the narrow ground of a particular doctrine, but on the broad contention that the Confessional teaching required to be corrected in its whole extent, from its presentation of the Divine Character to its account of the final destinies of mankind.¹

In April 1877 Fergus Ferguson submitted to the Glasgow Presbytery an overture praying the Supreme Court to undertake a radical revision of the Creed. After a vigorous and instructive debate the overture was rejected by a majority of one, in favour of a motion that the Synod take into consideration the whole question of the Church's relation to its Creed. Various overtures, however, anent Creed revision reached the Synod, and marked differences of opinion were speedily manifest. Eventually a committee was appointed to consider the whole question and report the following year. The motion adopted began with a preamble in which strong condemnation was expressed of 'the conduct of those persons who, having solemnly professed to give their assent to these Standards, do, notwithstanding, indulge in denouncing them.' It was put beyond doubt that this stricture applied especially to

¹ J. H. Leckie, D.D., *Fergus Ferguson, D.D.: His Theology and Heresy Trial*, p. 87. (T. and T. Clark.)

Ferguson, having in view his overture and the speech he had made in proposing it. This was strictly an outrage on justice, as neither the overture nor the speech was before the Court, or relevant to the discussion. Ferguson felt that he had been condemned without a trial, without proof of any kind, and without an opportunity of offering a word of explanation. He was under the conviction that he had simply nothing further to do with the denomination. He told his Session that it was his intention to resign his position as a minister of the United Presbyterian Church. He was, however, induced to take no action for the time, chiefly that the Presbytery might in the first instance satisfy itself as to his soundness in the faith.

At the end of the debate on his overture in the Presbytery an elder had risen and demanded that Ferguson be immediately prosecuted. He forthwith tabled a libel, charging him with holding certain heterodox opinions. The libel was ordered to remain 'on the table' meantime. With this libel hanging over Ferguson's head the meeting of Synod referred to above was held. The Presbytery was manifestly reluctant to move in the matter. It was practically coerced into action by the valiant protagonist of the faith of Calvin and his libel. But when the machinery of prosecution was set in motion, it was so arranged that logically conviction of the accused was inevitable. The Standard taken was the Confession of Faith. The orthodoxy or heterodoxy of Ferguson's opinions was determined by their agreement or disagreement with the Confessional doctrine. But the ground of Ferguson's proposals for Creed revision was that the Confession was out of harmony with the theological thinking of the time. It was necessary only to state

the Confessional positions, then to adduce as evidence of heterodoxy the relevant parts of the speech he made in support of his motion, and conviction followed with the certainty of natural law.

In the situation thus arising there was an element of the grotesque. The Standard under which Ferguson was tried was itself under suspicion. A Committee of the Supreme Court, of which Ferguson was a member, was actually considering what changes might be required to bring Church and Creed into a satisfactory relationship. That Confessional statements might have to be modified was recognized as a possibility. Further, it was notorious that some of the ablest men in the Presbytery felt the bonds of the Confession galling, and were personally in sympathy with Ferguson. He stepped into the open and frankly stated his reasons for asking that the Confession be revised. To base his condemnation on the purely technical ground that his opinions disagreed with the doctrines of the document he criticized, without any attempt to see whether or not the criticism was justified, savoured of rank oppression. The line taken by the Presbytery roused strong resentment in many minds. His congregation made the necessary arrangements to secede from the Church should sentence of deposition be pronounced against him. And it became clear from the attitude of ministerial brethren that if he went out he would not go alone. He had the unanimous support of the Press, and for the most part educated laymen considered the whole prosecution vexatious and unjustifiable. When Ferguson and his friends protested and appealed to the Synod against the decisions of Glasgow Presbytery, it was plain that the situation was one of grave import for the Church.

At this stage Thomson was moved to intervene. He had already taken a weighty part in correspondence which appeared in the *Glasgow Herald*, but he felt that some fuller statement of his views might be helpful alike to the cause of truth and to his friend. Dr. John Hutchison, in a letter to the present writer, says: 'I remember collaborating with him in producing a pamphlet on the Fergus Ferguson case in the Glasgow Presbytery. We were indignant at the way in which mere authority and numbers were attempting to crush real thought. Thomson wrote the pamphlet, and I begged the £10 to pay for its printing. I think,' he adds modestly, 'we did effect some good.' Dr. Joseph Leckie declares that the pamphlet had a decided influence. Ferguson's own opinion of it as an exposition of his views is indicated below.

In a note prefixed to the pamphlet Thomson says: 'As a personal friend of Mr. Ferguson I need not say that I have watched the case against him with the most painful interest. I had been a whole year associated with him in Dalkeith, and enjoyed daily the most unreserved intercourse with him—knew not only his deep piety, but also the profound orthodoxy that lay beneath his novel modes of expression. Precluded by being a probationer from explaining Mr. Ferguson's positions in the Courts of the Church, I wrote an explanation of them, as I understood them, in relation to the Confession, and submitted it to one of the ministers of the Glasgow Presbytery. His answer was: "That is satisfactory enough, but I do not know but Mr. Ferguson may denounce your exposition of his views." This led me, after extending and altering it to meet the new form of libel, to submit the exposition to Mr. Ferguson, and in conse-

quence I have received from him the subjoined letter :—

ELLEN BANK, QUEEN MARY AVENUE,
CROSSHILL, GLASGOW, *May 6, 1878.*

MY DEAR MR. THOMSON,—I have had the privilege of making myself acquainted with the contents of your very able pamphlet on the controversy in which I have been engaged ; and if it is of the slightest interest or value to you to know how far I concur in the representation it gives of the whole question at issue, and of the positions I have endeavoured to maintain in particular, I can truly and cordially say that I think it a clear and masterly statement of the case, and a correct exhibition of my contention. I trust it may carry to the minds of others the conviction it is so well fitted to convey.

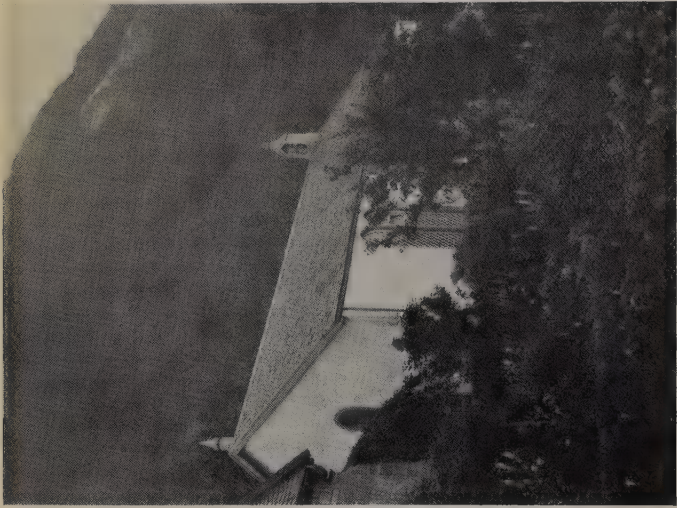
Ever yours,F. FERGUSON.

‘ In conclusion, I need only say that this pamphlet was written at first without Mr. Ferguson’s knowledge, and was only submitted to him in its completed form.’

Of Thomson’s mood in writing the pamphlet we may gather an idea from two entries in his diary : ‘ We hope that the brethren in the Synod will comport themselves more like judges, and less like advocates speaking to a brief, than did the men in Glasgow Presbytery.’ Again, after noting the chief events in the career of William of Occam, he says : ‘ His effort was to break away from the scholastic system that predominated, and to get greater freedom. In the result he was accused of being a Pelagian, a Judaiser, etc., with as much reason as a certain reverend father in Glasgow accused Mr. Ferguson of being an atheist. Voetius could not plead the excuse of a limited intelligence and impending dotage.’

In the pamphlet Thomson utters a warning lest in our zeal for the doctrinal truth we should injure the Master in the person of one of His servants. A glance at history, showing the dishonour done to truth by the persecution of doctrines in one generation and the adoption of them in the next, points the necessity for caution. A man must not be made a transgressor for a word. The heresy must be in the thinking. No method should be applied to the discovery of heresy which, if applied to the words of our Lord and His apostles, would make them discrepant. We must be sure, when terms are differently defined, whether or not different things are meant. Further, open questions must be admitted in theology: questions involving nothing vital, or upon which the Church has come to no finding. Heresy, then, is essential difference from the Church in thought on vital questions. Vital truth Chalmers defines as 'what you would teach a heathen.' In a particular Church we must add what is involved in its differentia. A heretic, therefore, is one whose type of doctrine is essentially different on vital points from that of the denomination to which he belongs.

Thomson takes the counts in the indictment seriatim. By exact statement and close reasoning he shows how in one case difference of expression covers harmony of belief; in another how Ferguson, by a definition, goes beyond, while not contradicting, Confessional doctrine; and again, how a difference proves finally to be one of abstract metaphysics, not of theology, where Scripture is silent and the Church has not decided, so that freedom of opinion may be demanded. We may quote one admirable example of his method. Under Count V., the Thesis—statement of Confessional doctrine—is: 'That every sin being a trans-



OLD CHURCH, BLAIRLOGIE
(p. 21)



ALLAN PARK CHURCH, STIRLING
(p. 89)

gression of the law of God, and contrary thereto, doth in its own nature bring guilt and condemnation upon the sinner, and make him subject to the penalty of death; that this death is not the annihilation of man as a creature whose soul possesses an immortal subsistence, but the punishment of him as a sinner on account of guilt; and that guilt is only removed in this world when salvation through Christ is freely offered to sinners in virtue of His redemption, certainly applied and effectively communicated to all those who are in time by the Holy Spirit enabled to believe in Him according to the Gospel, as also to others incapable of being called outwardly by the ministry of the word.'

The Antithesis—statement of Mr. Ferguson's views—is: 'That in view of Christ's death there is not now any other ground of human condemnation in the sight of God than unbelief in Christ; that before the final judgment all men will have judged themselves in the light of Christ into which they are brought in the intermediate state to the extent of seeing that every sin they committed, whether in heathen or in Christian lands, was virtually an act of unbelief in Him, being infidelity to the truth of God in their own being; and that as God hath decreed to save every one who accepts Christ as his Saviour, that implies that every one will have an opportunity of doing so, if not in this world, then in the world to come.'

Thomson proceeds: 'The thesis in this count contains an assertion which, while not contradicted in the antithesis of this count, is contradicted in the antithesis of Count No. I., to wit: "man's soul possesses an immortal subsistence." If ever there was a piece of pure metaphysics this is one. It is certainly not taught in Scripture that man is necessarily im-

mortal by his nature. It may be possible to prove this metaphysically ; or Kant may be right, it may be impossible to do so : but what has that to do with religion ? It is a question of mere metaphysics, what the natural result of sin would have been on man in the abstract had God had no purpose of mercy. Further, the thesis asserts that every transgression deserves punishment. Mr. Ferguson, again, asserts that the only sin now punishable is unbelief ; but further goes on to say that every sin involves unbelief. Both thesis and antithesis assert that every sin shall be punished, but the thesis asserts that the work of Christ makes no difference in the way in which sin is regarded ; but Mr. Ferguson holds that since Christ has died, unbelief in Christ, as involved in sin, is what is punished. Mr. Ferguson seems to have Scripture on his side. The statement of John iii. 18, " He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God," seems to make unbelief the only cause of condemnation. More important in some respects is John xvi. 9, where in assigning a reason for the Spirit's convicting and reproving work in regard to sin it is said, " of sin, because they believed not in me," making unbelief the cause of sin. But even granting that this is not so, the upholders of the thesis are ready to admit that every sin involves unbelief : so does Mr. Ferguson. The only question between the two is whether the sinner is condemned for the transgression that has flowed from his unbelief, or for the unbelief from which it has flowed. If that is not theological hair-splitting I do not know what is. The practical result with regard to all who have heard the Gospel is the same ; and also, as it seems to me, in regard to all others. This brings us to

consider the doctrine of the intermediate state. Mr. Ferguson's doctrine is that in the case of those who have never had the opportunity of accepting Christ in this world, in the intermediate state the offer will be made to them. The thesis denies this. To the supporters of the thesis there is a dilemma which I would submit to them. No one that I ever met is prepared to say that no one of those who have never had an opportunity of believing in Christ can be saved. If any are saved it must be by either faith or works. Paul's whole argument, alike in Romans and Galatians, goes on the assumption that there is no third alternative. If they are saved by works, that contradicts Paul's statement, "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." If by faith, faith cometh by hearing, and how can they hear without a preacher? This exclusion of works applies absolutely, as indeed the words "no flesh" necessitate; but if any should attempt to get out of the difficulty by saying that the heathen have not the law, then they are met by Paul's other statement in Romans, of the heathen who "do by nature the things contained in the law." There is no escape from the dilemma; either they must, as it seems to me, assert the numerical loss of the heathen, of infants, and of idiots, or else admit something like Mr. Ferguson's position. Another thing I would submit to the Glasgow Presbytery, who unanimously allowed that count to go against Mr. Ferguson: that the Confession gives no tenable interpretation to 1 Pet. iii. 19; that it omits all notice of the doctrine of the descent of Christ into Hades—a doctrine found in all the greater Creeds and Confessions save itself—noticeable among these being the original Scottish Confession. Surely, at all events, such a doctrine as this might be reckoned among the

questions on which a difference of opinion might be permitted.'

After discussing the several counts, and having discovered no essential differences on vital points, he continues: 'No one, I think, needs to be informed that the type of Mr. Ferguson's theology is thoroughly evangelical and Calvinistic. If, then, our preliminary principles are correct, the Church cannot exclude him from its communion. The real difference . . . is between the metaphysics of the seventeenth century and those of the nineteenth. It is not, as some in ignorance would say, a question of theology with or without metaphysics. We cannot think without metaphysics, and the whole Confession is modelled on the basis of the philosophy of its time. In some things the Westminster divines were very advanced for their day—the Federal Theology of which Cocceius is the greatest exponent was the most recent speculation of the day, and was at once adopted. The *Summa* of Cocceius was published almost simultaneously with the Confession. Whether does it become us to imitate the spirit of the Westminster divines, or, in opposition to it, to remain by their words?'

The truth was then attacked on the lines of the prevailing philosophy. The Confessional statement was made with a view to the surest defence on these lines. The assault is now made on totally different lines. Efforts to readjust the statement of our doctrines so as to meet the modern onslaught are really to be welcomed. If the Church must depose men for such efforts, let her be perfectly frank about it. 'Let it be announced that it is because he follows the metaphysics of the century in which he was born rather than those of the seventeenth century that the prosecutors would depose Mr. Ferguson; then,

however foolish the proceeding, less injustice would be done.' He makes a strong plea on behalf of the speculative theologian. 'Speculation in theology must be permitted—the whole history of Christian doctrine declares this. Had it not been for Anselm's speculations in theology, we might to this day have been maintaining the "diabolical" theory of the Atonement found in the Fathers.' The Church that has nothing better than 'bell, book, and candle' for the pioneers who seek to maintain the truth in vital contact with the thought of successive ages is compassing its own doom.

Finally, the ineptitude of such struggles in the conditions of the time is strikingly illustrated. 'On every side the truth is assailed. Criticism demands of us our right to call the Bible God's word, or to believe its contents. Science and Philosophy assail the very fundamentals of all religion. Positivism denies that there is a personal God; Materialism denies that there is in any real sense a personal man. Surely when the essentials of all religion are being assailed everywhere, when you cannot open a scientific magazine but you see scoffs at things we count most sacred, surely such a time as this is not one to be squabbling about minute points of difference such as those involved in the present case. When we listen to these bitter theological struggles in the Church, and see all around the enemies of the faith mustering thick, we are terribly reminded of the conflicts of John of Gischala with Simon bar Giora within Jerusalem while the battering-rams of Titus were shaking the walls.'

The appeal to the Synod excited widespread interest. Feeling keenly, men did not always exercise perfect self-control, and there were some stormy scenes. The decision of the Glasgow Presbytery on the first count

was affirmed. Ferguson felt that in view of this verdict he could move no further in the matter, and intimated this in a speech of singular restraint and dignity. Some hundred and twenty, including 'most of the young scholars and thinkers of the Church,' registered their dissent from the finding of the Synod. The atmosphere was tense, and heavy with anxiety for the future of the Church. No further defence was offered, and the findings of the Synod, sustaining the Glasgow Presbytery's decisions on the remaining counts of the libel, were purely formal. Ferguson had been found guilty. The Court was now called on to consider sentence. Not without reason, there prevailed 'a mood of uncertainty, doubt, and fear.' We need not follow proceedings through committee, report, and discussion. Suffice it to say that in the end of the day, by something like a *tour de force*, Professor Calderwood persuaded the Synod to adopt a motion, the effect of which was to regret certain of Mr. Ferguson's speculations, to restore him forthwith to the discharge of his ministerial functions, and to address to him an affectionate and solemn admonition. 'He made no claim that the "heretic" had withdrawn his "heresies," nor did he conceal his profound disagreement with him, but he declared his belief that Mr. Ferguson was essentially orthodox as to the Atonement, and that his unpleasing opinions on some subjects were not held in such a form as to be a peril to the faith.'¹ The 'heretic' thus found himself in the strange position of being condemned, and yet discharged practically scot-free. It was, as Dr. Leckie says, 'the reality of acquittal in the form of condemnation. He had carried his flag unlowered

¹ J. H. Leckie, D.D., *Fergus Ferguson, D.D.: His Theology and Heresy Trial*, p. 258. (T. and T. Clark.)

to the end. In fine, he had achieved the explicit toleration of anti-Calvinistic beliefs within the walls of a Calvinistic Communion.' ¹

It was a matter of satisfaction to Thomson that he was able to make a substantial contribution towards the victory of his friend, and that his assistance was so generously acknowledged. But although settled as far as the Church Courts were concerned, the controversy continued for a time to be a vital interest, as we may gather from an entry in the diary : ' Met M—— ; talked about texts ; then about *Don Quixote* ; finally quarrelled over Ferguson ' !

¹ Leckie, *ibid.*, p. 262.

CHAPTER VI

Stirling—Scholar and Teacher—Friend and Counsellor of Young Men—Intimates—Robertson of Irvine—Work, Civic and Religious—Italy—‘Greek Thomson’—Uncle George.

THE Rev. Charles Jerdan, LL.B., D.D., of Greenock, formerly Clerk to the General Assembly, writes that he first met Thomson at the Divinity Hall, where, being in different years, they saw little of each other. ‘But,’ he continues, ‘after I was ordained at Dennyloanhead, where he and his mother lived just a stone’s-throw from the church and manse, I began to know him. He never seemed to me to change much in the half-century that followed. There was the making of a “rabbi,” or rather of a “pundit,” in him even in 1867. . . . He was a godly and devout, as well as a scholarly and learned man.’ Dr. Jerdan testifies also to his sense of humour, the bright twinkle of his eye indicating a gift more precious than gold to the much-tried probationer. During succeeding years much of his time was devoted to private teaching, for which his attainments eminently fitted him. Occasionally he was called to temporary duty in Stirling High School. For many years he was entrusted with the supervising of school examinations in Stirling and Falkirk. In the winter of 1879-1880, during the illness of the Rector which terminated fatally, he acted as Classical Master in Montrose Academy. His work was much appreciated, and he made many friends. Chief among these were the children of the Rev. J. A.

and Mrs. George, of St. John's Free Church, with whom he afterwards maintained a correspondence, his letters, illustrated with comical sketches, being highly prized. Mrs. George recalls a visit he paid them later in their summer quarters—a shepherd's cottage at Tarfside, Glenesk, a lovely spot, miles from a railway. A picnic was arranged to Invermark old castle, whither they marched, each carrying a share of utensils and provisions. There was a long walk over the Rowan Hill and down to Lochlee. Thomson was the life of the party, entering into all the fun. Indeed, among children he was always at his best.

In 1874 Thomson and his mother moved to Stirling and took up their residence at 10 Allan Park. This had originally been called 'Wellington Terrace,' but the part taken by the 'Iron Duke' in opposing the Reform Bill alienated the sympathies of the Radical folk in Stirling, and his name gave place to that of the storied stream that flows into the Forth from the north. Thomson then joined the congregation of Allan Park, of which the minister was the Rev. J. T. Gowanlock. He took a lively and helpful interest in all the work of the church, preaching frequently, and very often conducting the week-night Prayer Meeting. He was generous in the assistance given to neighbouring ministers, who could always rely upon him in an emergency. Thomson soon became an office-bearer in Allan Park Church, and in 1880 was ordained to the eldership. He became superintendent of the Sunday School, with the late Mr. William Lawson as secretary. They made admirable yoke-fellows. Both were fertile in ideas, and with Mr. Lawson's practical and organizing genius the school was raised to a high pitch of efficiency. The Bible Class which he conducted for a time was the meeting-place for many

fresh and eager spirits. He took an influential part in most movements, social and political, in the community. He was specially identified with a scheme managed by certain philanthropic ladies for the benefit of the girls who worked in the local mills. Meetings for them were held in the hall under the North Parish Church. Here his services as speaker were constantly in demand, and from the rich treasures of his mind he gave without stint for entertainment and instruction. It was no small thing to win as he did the ear and confidence of those rollicking girls.

But perhaps his most signal service was rendered in the Young Men's Fellowship Meeting, of which he was permanent chairman. The meetings were held on Sunday mornings before church. 'He gave us,' says Mr. David Kinross, 'a fine insight into the Old Testament, especially the Minor Prophets. He had the knack of selecting passages for reading and comment a bit off the beaten track. He always brought his Hebrew Old Testament with him for reference. Dr. Thomson, with his Biblical knowledge, was a great help to me, and for those who knew a little of Hebrew and Greek he must have been able to do a great deal more. We liked him best when he had been called on unexpectedly, say on the Saturday, and had little time to prepare.' It would appear that the stream from the reservoir of his knowledge flowed more swiftly and clearly when the sluices were suddenly pulled up than when it was poured through a carefully constructed channel. Mr. David B. Morris, Town Clerk of Stirling, writes: 'It was seldom indeed that he was absent from the chair at the meetings on Sunday mornings, no matter what the weather might be, or what engagements he had to fulfil throughout the day. In this way he was guide, philosopher, and

friend to more than one generation of the young men of the congregation. His vast learning and his readiness to be helpful to all, no matter how youthful or ignorant, made him an ideal chairman for such a meeting. At times his learning was a little beyond his audience. On one occasion he treated the meeting to a criticism of something that Professor Margoliouth had written concerning Ashurbanipal. It was obvious that the doctor was keenly excited, not to say heated, and his exposition suffered somewhat in consequence. The result was shown in the course of the remarks made by those present at the close of the address, when a youthful member said he was inclined to agree with Ashurbanipal rather than with Margoliouth in the dispute which Dr. Thomson had made so clear to the meeting.'

'Although the doctor was no singer,' continues Mr. Morris, 'he was always a welcome friend at choir social meetings or picnics. For a series of years he wrote a Christmas greeting in rhyme, which was set to music by the late Mr. James L. Graham, the choir-master of the church. These unique Christmas cards, with their combination of musical and literary talent, were much valued by the recipients. One winter Dr. Thomson and Mr. Graham collaborated in a series of lectures, which were delivered in the lesser Albert Hall, on the great composers. These lectures, which were illustrated by selections given by the choir, were attended by large audiences, and excited much interest in the town. At the literary meeting connected with the church Dr. Thomson was in his right place. I remember a lecture which he gave on "The Historical Development of the Beautiful in Art," and also his keenness in supporting the age of Shakespeare as a time of greater literary eminence

than the nineteenth century. While keen to uphold his views in debate against all comers, Dr. Thomson was very modest as to his own literary ability. *The Upland Tarn*, a volume of verse published by him, shows much poetic merit; but he never referred to it in conversation, although he would talk freely of his controversial works. To oblige any one asking help on literary or other subjects, Dr. Thomson would put himself to endless trouble, and never grudged time or labour spent for the advantage of others.

‘Connected with the church there was a very good circulating library of which full advantage was taken by the congregation, as the Public Library did not exist in those days. It was managed by a committee of which Dr. Thomson was chairman for a long period of years. In the choice of books to be purchased, his breadth of view and sound literary judgment were manifested, and much of the success of the library was due to his interest in it.’

His own youthfulness of spirit, his lively wit and kindly humour, won for Thomson unfailing welcome among young people, and nowhere was he happier than in their stimulating company. For the influence of his comradeship in the early formative days there are many who cherish undying gratitude. Youths looking forward to a professional career especially attracted him. It was to him pure joy when he was able to assist any of them in their preliminary studies. As illustrating this phase of his usefulness, the following notes kindly contributed by the Rev. Charles H. Todd, M.A., of Aberdeen, may fittingly be introduced.

‘It must have been towards the close of the “seventies,”’ writes Mr. Todd, ‘that I first made Dr. Thomson’s acquaintance. He was at that time resident in Allan Park, Stirling (No. 10, I think), a

house that was very familiar to me for many years afterwards. I was introduced to "J. E. H.," as we used to call him, by our mutual friend, David Bruce, now General Sir David Bruce of sleeping-sickness-investigation fame. Soon after this I resolved (somewhat late in the day) to prepare for a University course of study, and from the very first Dr. Thomson's guidance and advice, most freely given, were of the greatest service to me.

' My first sight of the study at No. 10 remains ever memorable. The walls of the room were lined with book-shelves from floor to ceiling, and all closely packed. His writing-desk, itself covered with books in more or less immediate use, was reached by a narrow passage through more books piled on the floor. In fact, the only free spaces seemed at first sight to be ceiling, fireplace, and window. The library was strong in philosophy, history, and theology, though general literature was plentifully represented. And the wonderful thing about this library, as we soon discovered, was that the owner of it had read almost every book on its shelves. His knowledge of history struck me especially, but he was well up in the poets, essayists, and novelists. In fact, he seemed to have read everything. We had many talks on Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Scott (at this period philosophy was beyond me). I remember well a criticism passed by my friend on George Eliot, which, in my then enthusiastic admiration for that writer, I hotly disputed, but of which I learned later to see the wisdom. He set Sir Walter Scott's power of dramatic characterization far above George Eliot's psychological analysis, declaring that he would continue to be read when she was forgotten. Not a year passes now but I read something of Scott; whereas it must be many years

since I looked at *Middlemarch* or *Daniel Deronda*. This conversation made a lasting impression on my mind, and I was surprised when, on recalling it to my friend many years afterwards, I found that he had entirely forgotten it.

‘One of the pleasantest of my Allan Park memories is of a gathering of four of us, Sir David Bruce being one, who met to read German together. I cannot recall how often we met in the course of a week, but I know that the hour of meeting was before breakfast, a truly heroic effort as it seems now. We went through a great deal of Goethe—*Faust*, *Egmont*, etc.—and most of Schiller’s historical dramas—*Wallenstein*, *Maria Stuart*, *Don Carlos*, etc. I had before this spent some time on the Continent and was supposed to know a little of the language, but we were all enthusiastic, and none more so than our host. In such reading as this his knowledge of European and English history—and what history had he not read?—was of the greatest help in throwing light upon the numerous allusions to persons and events we met with. In any difficulty Thomson would rise from his seat, go straight to the proper spot, take down a volume of Froude, or Freeman, or Gardiner, and settle the question at once. His keen sense of humour, too, had abundant outlet at these meetings, and shouts of laughter would resound through the room at some ludicrous rendering of a ticklish passage, or when the suggestion of a ridiculous pun was too strong to be resisted.

‘Our friend was in his element at such times, for he was always happy in sharing his knowledge with any student who desired it. I think, however, that what he loved most was counselling men who were studying for the University. I know what he did for

myself in this way, and should think there must be not a few in the ministry of the Church to-day who owe much to his ready and generous kindness.

‘ Another sunny reminiscence of those days is my meeting with that remarkable man, the late Dr. W. B. Robertson of Irvine. He was a close friend of Dr. Thomson and his mother, and while staying at Bridge of Allan used often to come in and spend an afternoon and evening with them. On such occasions, as another member of the company once remarked, the “entertainment” consisted for the most part in listening to the Doctor’s somewhat one-sided conversation with his hostess, and that was certainly delightful. But he would occasionally spend most of his time in the study, where the talk became more intimate, and he would show us something of his deeper thoughts, or perhaps read one or two of his poems, then in manuscript.

‘ Following on those earlier years there came a considerable gap in my visible contact with Dr. Thomson, though none in our friendship; and in later years, after his return from his work in Palestine, I had the happiness of receiving him as an occasional guest in Aberdeen, which he visited in connection with the business of the United Free Church College there. He had much to tell us of his experience at Safad, and of his travels in trans-Jordanic regions. Last of all, when, after being obliged to retire from my own work in Aberdeen, I settled in Edinburgh, it was my good fortune to find that we were within easy distance of my old friend, who had indeed given us a welcome before we actually set foot in the city. By this time, of course, many things had changed. Dr. Thomson had for long concentrated his attention on Oriental Studies, and more especially on Critical problems

bearing on the interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures. He had published his work on *Books which Influenced Our Lord and His Apostles*, a *Commentary on Daniel*, his lectures on *The Samaritans*, and other volumes. I found him, in spite of his advanced age, as keenly engrossed in work as ever, and exploring regions of scholarship where I could not follow him. But we resumed the threads of our friendship as if they had never been dropped, and very soon 170 Mayfield Road became as familiar as 10 Allan Park had been. He was still the student, keen and alert in mind, ready to discuss and even "dispute," though not "with much contention," any of the many questions that interested him: ready, too, to share what he knew with minds less informed than his own. His deeply devout spirit, his valiant defence of what he held to be the truth, above all, his intense loyalty to "the Lord and His apostles," led him to take up positions in Biblical interpretation not always pleasing to modern Criticism. I think I sometimes noticed a strain of disappointment that his work had not received the recognition it deserved because of the confident assumptions, and what we may call without exaggeration the intolerable intolerance, of a certain extreme school of Critics. But however frankly he spoke, there was no bitterness in his words. And indeed, as I cast a glance over the long years since we first met, and think of all that has come and gone since the early Stirling days, I cannot recall a single instance of evil-speaking of any man on my friend's part. What I do remember most is the depth and reasoned strength of his Christian faith, his unfailing kindness, his eager desire to put his wide knowledge at the service of others, and his uncommon freedom from unfair or uncharitable



FOUNTAIN AT NAZARETH: OLD AND NEW

(p. 130)

judgments of those from whom he felt constrained by conscience to differ. These are precious memories to have of such a friend.'

When, across half the world, the news of Dr. Thomson's death reached a youthful friend, he wrote to his sister: 'I saw with deep regret in the *Record* that Dr. Thomson had passed on. If ever learning sat graciously and humbly upon any human brow, it sat upon his. I can never forget how he never "told" me anything, but always "reminded" me of it—me, who knew a little less than nothing. Truly Dad has lost a friend, and the world a gentleman.'

Thomson was a man of many and varied interests, and his life was very full. He enjoyed intimate fellowship with a large circle of friends. Among these were the gifted brothers Yellowlees: David, the famous alienist who so long reigned at Gartnavel, whose professional knowledge we shall see placed freely at Thomson's disposal; Robert, ex-Provost of Stirling, eager of spirit, generous of mind, from whose presence dullness fled away, to the flashing of whose rapier-like wit Thomson responded with equal brilliance; and John, the beloved minister of Carron, exuberant, large-hearted, with a passion for friendly dialectic. Those who knew the two men can appreciate the note in Thomson's diary: 'John Yellowlees came. We argued about various things.' Of the younger men, Henry Kinross and William Lawson were congenial spirits, richly endowed by nature, and too soon taken from us. Two friends of the earlier days, Ebenezer Russell and Dr. John Hutchison, were frequent visitors in Stirling. Kindred tastes, historical and classical, lent a special charm to their fellowship. 'I was always very intimate with him,' wrote Dr. Hutchison, 'when he stayed at Blairlogie and afterwards in Allan Park,

Stirling, and still later in Edinburgh. Many a time on a Saturday I took the train to Larbert and walked—meeting him half-way—to Stirling, when we had tea with his mother, and then I took a late train back to Glasgow after settling the affairs of the universe till our next meeting.’ Dr. Hutchison recalled attending with him a course of lectures on the History of Religion delivered by Principal Caird at Gilmorehill on Saturdays at twelve o’clock. They were accompanied by Miss Margaret Macrae, sister of the famous David, and Dr. Thomson’s cousin Bessie, afterwards Mrs. Forrest of Galston. He observes that the audience consisted of two hundred ladies, mainly West End, and fifty men.

Another visitor whose advent brought sunshine was Thomson’s cousin, Dr. James D. Maclaren, some nine years his senior, whom he ever held in the deepest affection and regard.

Of Dr. W. B. Robertson of Irvine we have already spoken. A warm friendship sprang up between the Stirling probationer and the veteran minister in his retirement at Bridge of Allan. Thomson spoke with admiring gratitude of the gracious influence exercised by the poet-preacher in the fair evening of life; of the beauty and strength of his character. Both possessing a strong sense of humour, there were inevitably many flashes of fun, keenly, not to say hilariously enjoyed. One incident Thomson related with great zest, although telling against himself. On one occasion he was preaching, with Robertson and another clerical friend in the audience. In the course of a somewhat purple patch he referred to ‘the sweep of the universe.’ ‘What’s the sweep of the universe?’ queried Robertson’s friend in a whisper. ‘I dinna ken,’ was the whispered reply, ‘unless it’s the deil!’

In the intellectual life of the town Thomson took a leading part. 'During a considerable period,' says Mr. Morris, 'Dr. Thomson was much interested in Stirling Natural History and Archæological Society, for a time known as the Stirling Field Club. He was an original member, being present at the inaugural meeting on November 19, 1878, called on the invitation of the late Mr. Alexander Croall, the gifted Curator of the Smith Institute at Stirling. Dr. Thomson was elected to a place on the first committee of the Society, and for a time in 1883 he acted as secretary. He took an active part in the excursions which the Society made to places of interest in the neighbourhood, and no one was keener at climbing old walls and brushing through thorn hedges, reckless of danger to person or clothing.' Thomson wrote for the Society reports of their expeditions, and of antiquities discovered in the district. He also read various papers: one on the Ballads of Stirlingshire. 'A paper,' says Mr. Morris, 'showing a considerable amount of original historical research was submitted on June 1, 1886. It was entitled "The Mammet King," being an account of the mysterious person who professed to be Richard II. of England, and who was received as such at the Royal Court at Stirling.' He discussed Theories of the Glacial Period; contributed geological notes of a visit to Vesuvius and Solfatara, and a final paper in June 1903, on 'Certain Babylonian Bricks.'

'Dr. Thomson,' says Mr. Morris, 'was a member of the Y.M.C.A., but was never quite at home in its activities. The methods of the Y.M.C.A. did not make any strong appeal to him, although for a time he was a Director of the Association. In that capacity he concerned himself more with the secular business than with the religious work, and, as he had difficulty

in agreeing with his fellow Directors, he shortly resigned. He was, however, interested in the literary branch of the Y.M.C.A. I remember one paper read by him entitled "The Middle Ages." At that time the course of public lectures conducted by the Association was a feature in the life of the community, and Dr. Thomson was frequently called on to act as chairman, or to move a vote of thanks to the lecturer. In either capacity he thoroughly enjoyed himself, and would generally treat the audience to a supplementary lecture, bringing out points that appeared to him to have been overlooked, or not sufficiently emphasized.'

At an early stage in his career, in modest self-criticism, Thomson notes in his diary: 'I suspect that *soirée*-speaking ought to be avoided by me.' If in regard to these social functions he passed a self-denying ordinance, few men can ever have found greater delight in well-contested debate. Into dialectic encounters he entered with keen zest; and one may almost say that the more fast and furious waxed the strife, whether winning or losing, the greater his exhilaration. He positively loved the man who could put up a good fight against him.

'In the early "eighties" there was a flourishing Parliamentary Debating Society in Stirling,' says Mr. Morris, 'in which Dr. Thomson took much interest. He was unanimously chosen Speaker, and his knowledge of the rules and traditions of Parliamentary procedure, and the keenness with which he followed the debates and ruled transgressors out of order, would have done credit to St. Stephen's itself.' Thomson's references to this Society in his diary are succinct: 'Oct. 24, 1882. Parliamentary Society: made Speaker: debate opened all right.' Clearly there were exhilarating breezes; *e.g.* on April 10,

1883, he writes: 'Parliament at night: great row'; and a week later: 'Tories victorious by 7: great excitement.' A calmer note is struck on October 16th: 'Parliament: elected Speaker again: all went well.'

'Profound scholar though he was,' continues Mr. Morris, 'Dr. Thomson had no difficulty in associating familiarly with any company bent on social enjoyment. His innate goodness of heart made him enter eagerly into any fun that was going on. At Bible Class or Choir social evenings he could be at times the life of the party. I remember him acting in character on one occasion, wearing a glengarry bonnet, personating a Highland shepherd. Dr. Thomson's imitation of the accent of the Gael was excruciatingly funny.'

'He could be witty too, although his wit was not generally caustic, as it was in the following incident. There was one man with whom Dr. Thomson could never agree. An upright, austere man, slow of speech, unlearned, methodical, and suspicious, much given to the obstruction of business, M—— N—— was in many respects the antithesis of Dr. Thomson. The worthy man died, and shortly afterwards, in conversation about the event, the Doctor was heard to remark quietly, "There will have been a great many amendments moved in heaven during the last fortnight!"'

We have noted Thomson's connection with the Parliamentary Debating Society. Politics, like everything else, he took seriously. He was perhaps too critical and open-minded to be closely identified with any party, but traditional Liberalism was in his blood, and he gave generally loyal, if discriminating, support to Liberal measures. He was, however, dissatisfied with Mr. Gladstone's Irish Policy, which culminated in the Home Rule Bill of 1886. He

sympathized with the Unionist view, and for some years was associated with that party. He had a profound regard for Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who was then M.P. for the Stirling Burghs, and political differences brought no change in the friendly relations of the two men. Possibly his sojourn in the East, remote from the turmoil and the strife, enabled him to see things in a new perspective, with an insight into their significance which made him prescient of the day when parties would be tumbling over each other in their haste to give to Ireland under duress a measure of self-government which in the 'eighties' might have been offered with grace and accepted with gratitude. He returned therefore to his old political allegiance: an allegiance that never blinded him to the excellences in the persons and programmes of his opponents.

In the spring of 1886 a bazaar for a public object was held in Bridge of Allan. The hall was arranged to resemble the Court of the Lions in the Alhambra. Thomson collaborated with Mr. Baker, Art Master in the High School, Stirling, to produce what was something unique in the way of a guide-book. Preserving the Oriental note, Thomson wrote a whimsical account of a supposed visit of the Mahdi to take the waters at Bridge of Allan, and the astonishing experiences he met with. This occupied the first part of the guide-book. Mr. Baker's illustrations lent distinction to the work. It is safe to say that nothing sold at that bazaar possesses equal value to-day.

Miss von Niebuhr opened a correspondence with Thomson in 1875, the character of which may be gathered from his note: 'Her line is the glorification of ignorance: singular in the granddaughter of the historian Niebuhr.' We may be sure that in the

controversy ignorance received a shock. One wishes that the diary were a little fuller when he touches on subjects that obviously stirred him. 'Met young man, N——' runs one entry, 'supplied him with arguments against scepticism': a very congenial task. Again, 'Had difference with J—— T—— about unfermented wine.' Thomson of course was clear enough that where there is no fermentation there is no wine. 'Unfermented wine' is therefore a contradiction in terms. Again, 'Had argument with a most peculiar Christian: nobody right but himself.' Was he really so very peculiar?

Certain advocates of what is known as the Anglo-Israel Theory came to Stirling, and their propaganda attracted some attention. The theory assumes that the British people are descendants of the 'lost ten tribes of Israel.' By ingenious manipulation of Bible texts a position is built up which is temptingly open to attack from one with Thomson's scholarly equipment. In the interests of historical truth and sane thinking he entered the lists, dealing his blows with devastating effect, but at the same time with great good humour. On September 19, 1882, he writes: 'Went to Anglo-Israel meeting: great fun.' Next day a letter in the local press began a newspaper controversy which furnished entertainment to the lieges for weeks, leaving the theory in sad tatters.

In the pages of the diary there are echoes of events transpiring in the world. In 1878 he records the death of that vivid and forceful personality, George Gilfillan, from whose friendship he had derived no little stimulus and encouragement. We hear the rumble of the Tay Bridge disaster on that tragic Sunday night in December 1879. In January 1881 the river Forth was bound in fetters of ice, and

Thomson walked across to Cambuskenneth Abbey on the 21st. On July 11, 1882, the thunder of the guns at Alexandria heralds the Egyptian War. A bit of very different information is given us on May 30, 1885. 'The cat killed itself.' How, there is no history; but the event suggests the question, 'Has a cat nine lives?'

Holidays at times pleasantly broke life's routine. There are references to days spent in sketching and climbing in Arran, the Orkneys, and the Highlands. Thomson wielded a deft and skilful pencil—a gift inherited from his mother. His sketch-book shows that he had a sure eye for the picturesque and the beautiful. In the spring of 1890, along with his trusty friend William Lawson, he visited Italy. He derived no little physical benefit from the voyage in the Mediterranean, and from their sojourn in the sunny south. Italy was ever for him a land of peculiar enchantment. His knowledge of history and archæology, and his acquaintance with the best that Italy had to show in art, filled this journey for Thomson and his friends with continual interest and delight. Here we can do no more than indicate the route followed. On February 28th, from Tilbury they sailed down the river in beautiful weather. On March 2nd, Sunday, Thomson conducted service on board 'in default of a better.' Passing the coast of Spain they 'saw Sierra Nevada covered with snow—the evening light on the snow very beautiful.' Duly impressed with the grim fortress of Gibraltar, they crossed over and landed at Algiers by night. Two days' sailing brought them to Naples, where attention was divided between Pompeii, Vesuvius, and the Museum. Pozzuoli, 'very interesting, but very dirty,' and Solfatara were visited. Observations made at

the two volcanoes, Vesuvius, still active, and Solfatara, now extinct, were used in the descriptive paper read to the Stirling Natural History and Archæological Society in February 1891. They spent some time in Rome, Florence, Fiesole, Venice (where ‘ splendid row in gondola ’ is chronicled), Ancona, Bari, and Brindisi. They sailed along the south coast of Italy, obtained a view of Sicily and her fiery Mount Etna, and then, keeping well in sight of the north coast of Africa, reached once more the shelter of the rock at Gibraltar. After a rough passage through the Bay of Biscay they arrived safely at Plymouth on April 14th.

On March 22, 1875, died Alexander Thomson, architect, to whom more than a passing allusion must be made. Illness prevented Thomson from attending his uncle’s funeral on the 26th. Two years later, on February 2, 1877, he had the proud satisfaction of seeing a bust of his gifted relative unveiled in the Municipal Art Gallery, Glasgow, when a fitting tribute was paid to that remarkable architectural genius.

Thomson projected and in great part wrote a Memoir of Alexander; but owing to circumstances not explained, the idea was departed from, and unfortunately the manuscript cannot now be traced. Referring to his uncle’s work at a later time he wrote : ‘ Alexander Thomson’s principle was that the architecture of the present ought to be the summation of the principles of the architecture of the past, not the imitation of its forms. Hence, while Classic architecture, especially that of Greece, represented subordination to law, and that of the Middle Ages represented freedom, the architect of the present must unite the two in free subordination: that in some sort, picturesqueness, the symbol of freedom, should,

without losing its character, become subject to law. It was this principle which led him to devote himself to Greek architecture as supplying the basis of law into conformity with which everything else was to be brought.'

Examples of the style that gained for Alexander the honourable sobriquet of 'Greek Thomson' are found in St. Vincent Street United Free Church, Caledonia Road United Free Church, Queen's Park United Free Church, and Great Western Terrace, all in Glasgow; and in Moray Place, Strathbungo.

Professor Blomfield described Alexander Thomson as 'probably the most original thinker in architecture of the nineteenth century. . . . While most of his contemporaries were scratching about in the rubbish heap of mediæval detail, Thomson was soaring aloft in the spacious solitudes of pure architecture.'

Viewing Queen's Park Church in 1883, Ford Madox Brown, the famous artist, asked, 'To what religion is the church dedicated?' His companion tried in vain to explain the elastic comprehensiveness of the Presbyterian religion. 'Enough! enough!' he cried. 'I want nothing better than the religion that produced art like that. Here line and colouring are suggestive of Paradise itself. I now know what has all along been wrong with my ceilings. Well done, Glasgow! I put the crypt of your Cathedral against anything I have seen in ancient Europe, as I do this Thomson-Cottier Church above everything I have seen in modern Europe.' Mr. Cottier, the contractor, gave Thomson valuable assistance, especially in harmonizing the tones of the colour scheme of decoration.¹

'Temperamentally,' says William Power in *The World Unvisited*, p. 87, 'Thomson was the product

¹ Queen's Park, *Our Jubilee Book*, pp. 113 ff.

of the Kippen hills and of the Old Testament. He was Semitic Thomson before he was Greek Thomson. His Greek studies gave linear purity and a constructive centre to his composite dream of Attic, Egyptian, Assyrian, and Jewish architecture. His spiritual home was some neutral point equidistant from Athens, Luxor, Nineveh, and Jerusalem. That at least is the impression one derives from the exterior of Queen's Park Church. With its sloping Phœnician doorways, its Greek ornamentation, its dwarf Egyptian columns, its plain, almost unnoticed window spaces, and its Assyrian-looking high dome, it is beyond doubt the most consummate synthesis of Græco-Semitic-Hamitic styles that has ever been achieved by any architect.'

There were many lovers of art who would fain have seen Thomson called upon to design the new University on Gilmorehill. Nor can we doubt that, his mature genius finding in this task an adequate sphere, he would have dowered the city with an architectural splendour—'a thing of beauty' and 'a joy for ever.'

'At Victoria, Western Africa, on the 14th December 1878, died George Thomson, architect, late of Glasgow.' Such was the notice that appeared in the home papers early in February 1879. George Thomson was already fifty-two years of age when he set out upon his pioneer missionary enterprise. He went with a purpose well thought out and carefully defined. The unhealthy conditions prevailing on the west coast of Africa were a serious hindrance to missionary work, and had proved fatal to many missionaries. His practical mind sought a remedy for this state of things. He proposed to secure a site in a suitable locality where a house might be built, and land which, with the assistance of the natives, might be profitably cultivated. His plan included: first, the establishing of a refuge

for missionaries whose health had been impaired ; second, a training institution for native evangelists similar to what had been so successful in Samoa ; and third, the gathering together of a native Christian community, separated from the evil influences of heathenism. It is true that he was not able to realize his dream, prevented by death, ' that great frustrator of human designs ' ; but in the Memoir that Thomson wrote of him, published in 1881, is enshrined an inspiring record of self-forgetful toil, heroic endeavour, and unconquerable devotion.

CHAPTER VII

The Presbytery Brotherhood—The Theta Clerical Club.

No account of Dr. Thomson would be complete without some reference to the happy relations prevailing between him and the brethren of the Presbytery, and to the Theological Club which he founded. What follows is from the pen of his old and dear friend, the Rev. W. B. R. Wilson of Dollar :—

‘ Life in those far-off, spacious days seems to me now to have been much more leisurely and kindly than it has grown to be in these anxious, restless, and burdened times. One feature of this freedom from rush and worry then characteristic of a minister’s life in a country congregation in Scotland was seen in the way in which the Stirling U.P. Presbytery as I knew it made each monthly meeting an occasion for prolonged brotherly intercourse. At the close of every regular meeting practically all the ministers and many of the elders adjourned to the Station Hotel, Stirling, to partake of dinner together ; when, it need not be said, the greatest cordiality and the frankest interchange of thought and opinion marked the intercourse of the brethren. The dinner over, those who could spare the time used to adjourn to an adjoining smoking-room, and what Carlyle was wont to call a “ tobacco parliament ” was held. The flow of free, friendly, open-hearted talk that followed was always so delightful, and often so impressive, that we all looked forward to these monthly meetings

with the greatest interest. Our friend Dr. Thomson, though he was not then a member of Presbytery, was welcomed as a probationer of the Church, and was often present at these gatherings. It was there I first learned how encyclopædic was his knowledge, and how vehement was his energy in expounding or defending any cause in which he was interested. At the close of these discussions, frequently, at his request, I accompanied him to his mother's home to join him in a cup of tea, and came to know what a true and tender heart was associated with that keen and trenchant intellect which, perhaps, to a stranger might seem the most prominent feature of his character.

' The United Presbyterian ministers of that generation in Stirling Presbytery were indeed an interesting and remarkable body of men. There was, foremost among them, that courteous, stately gentleman of the olden school, Dr. Robert Frew of St. Ninian's, whose ministerial life, taken with that of his father, covered a large part of the history of dissent in Scotland. He, moreover, survived to see the Union of the United Presbyterian and Free Churches. Before his death he was "father" of the United Church, and indeed the oldest surviving minister in all the Scottish Churches. There was also Mr. Steedman of Erskine Church, the mother church of the denomination, an eloquent man, whose power of ready speech and caustic wit made him a formidable adversary in debate. There was James Muir of Bridge of Allan, most gallant and most impulsive of men, easily roused to indignation, but incapable of cherishing resentment; the most loyal and devoted of friends. There was Dr. William Blair, Clerk of Presbytery, who ordained me to the ministry, and who, for innumerable kindly services in the course of a long life, must ever

be regarded by me with reverence and gratitude. There was that model pastor of a village church, Mr. Maclaren of Blairlogie, and that earnest evangelical leader, Mr. Moffat of Alva. There were also the genial Mr. Macintyre of Greenloaning, Mr. Berry of Buchlyvie, Mr. Knox and Mr. Gowanlock of Stirling, Mr. Whyte of Clackmannan, Mr. Dick of Bannockburn, well known as a cultured scholar, and, most lovable of all, Mr. Huie of Bridge of Teith. Later, filling vacancies caused by death or translation, came such men as Dickie of Alva, Scott of Stirling, Thomson of Alloa, Galletly of Tillicoultry, Smith of St. Ninian's, and Anderson of Blairlogie, who, on joining the brotherhood, carried on with unabated success and zest the tradition of frank, fearless, friendly fellowship inherited from "the fathers."

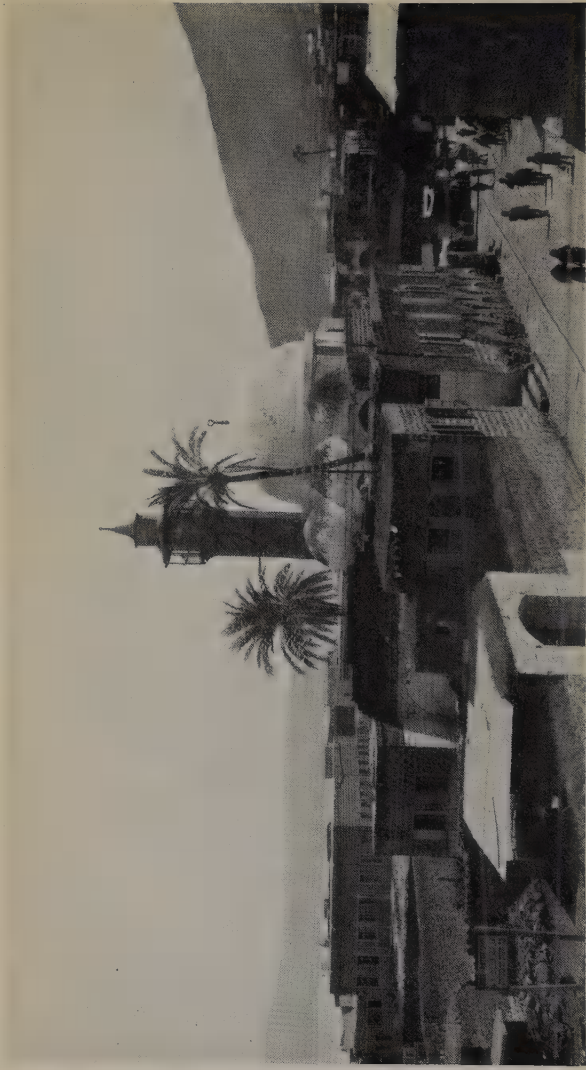
'As a member of this happy and hospitable band Thomson was in his element. The contribution he was able to bring to the entertainment and instruction of the gathering made him beyond a doubt its most important and popular member. Not only was he much the most learned man among us; he abounded in wit and humour, and even in badinage. His interests were wide, indeed all-embracing. No man I have ever met has shown himself to be so keen to know all that could be known of the *omne scibile*. Moreover, he was at the same time always eager and willing to communicate his stores of learning to others. He was, beyond most men, fond of and addicted to argument. Like the famous English writer Dr. Johnson, he delighted in debate, and always fought for victory. On every occasion when he appeared among us there was sure to be greater liveliness in our intercourse, and greater profit in our talk.

'But while always interesting and impressive in

these larger and more formal gatherings, to see Thomson at his best you required to meet him among a group of congenial spirits assembled for purposes of intellectual and spiritual self-culture. As I was personally a member of one of these assemblies, which, I may add, owed its origin to the initiative of Thomson himself, I may here indulge in a retrospective sketch of the rise, growth, and work of the interesting ministerial association known as "The Theta Club."

'In the year 1888 there arose in Dr. Thomson's mind the idea of forming a society of like-minded men in the ministry of the United Presbyterian Church, each known for his scholarly attainments and his broad, genial outlook on life, who should inspire and encourage one another in the more efficient discharge of their professional duties by meetings held monthly in each other's manses, at which papers should be read on previously arranged subjects by all the members in turn. He broached the subject to a few of his more intimate friends in Stirling Presbytery. The response was so favourable that a meeting was convened in his own house on the 17th of September that year. After some discussion it was agreed that those present form themselves into a club, of which the following should be the rules, viz. :—

- I. The Club shall be called the Theta Clerical Club, and shall consist of not more than twelve members.
- II. The meetings of the Club shall be held monthly in the houses of the members in rotation, as a rule on the forenoon of the third Tuesday of the month; the member in whose house the meeting is held being chairman for the day. At each meeting the date and hour of the next meeting shall be fixed.



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- III. Each member of the Club shall buy annually a book, or books, of the minimum value of ros. 6d., to be circulated among the members; the title of the book to be submitted to the Club before it is purchased.
- IV. All meetings shall be opened with devotional exercises.

‘ The original members were Dr. J. E. H. Thomson, the founder ; Rev. Matthew Dickie, Alva ; Rev. W. B. R. Wilson, Dollar ; Rev. Daniel Maclean, Alloa ; Rev. R. F. Anderson, Blairlogie ; Rev. Andrew Carter, Editor of the Stirling Tract Publications ; Rev. David Smith, St. Ninian’s, the first Secretary ; and Rev. Robert Mackenzie, Alloa : eight in all. The number twelve was completed by the election of Rev. William George, Dunfermline ; Rev. William Huie, Bridge of Teith ; Rev. W. G. Dickson, Muckart ; and Rev. T. E. Miller, Dunfermline.

‘ The first regular meeting was held at Alva, when Thomson led off with a paper on “ The Cherubim.”

‘ Rule III. worked out greatly to the advantage of the members, opening to them for private study a much larger selection of new books than would otherwise have been possible. There was an exchange of books at each monthly meeting, in regular order, so that by the end of the year all the books might have been perused by each minister ; after which they returned to their owners. It may be of interest to give a list of the books circulated among the members in 1891. It comprised *Lux Mundi*, *Development of Theology*, *Jameson’s Diary*, *Uganda*, *Vita Nuova*, *Hibbert Lecture*, *History of Fife and Kinross*, *Bampton Lecture* (1890), *Martensen’s Ethics*, *The Egoist*, *The Living Christ*, *Lightfoot’s Sermons*, and *Gifford Lectures*. The syllabus that year included such subjects as “ The

Sects of the Jews," by Dr. Thomson; "Recent Criticism of the Fourth Gospel," by R. F. Anderson; "Egyptology," by Daniel Maclean; "The Conception of God in the Old Testament," by Robert Mackenzie. In a debate on the question, "Should Questions of Biblical Criticism be Discussed in the Pulpit?" G. A. Johnston Ross took the affirmative, and David Smith the negative. In a review of the proceedings of Synod in May all the members took part. To introduce variety into the topics dealt with, I ventured to speak on one of my favourite private studies, as to the part taken by each of our Scottish counties in the development of Scottish life and thought. The theme chosen was "The Merse in Scottish History and Development." It proved so interesting to the members that I was encouraged to carry on, and before the meetings of the Club came to an end I had written a series of essays dealing with each of the Scottish counties on the lines followed in treating of Berwickshire.

'The cabbalistic Hebrew letters blazoned on the front of the syllabus used to excite the curiosity of visitors: שְׁנֵים־עָשָׂר אֲנַחְנוּ אַחִים. They were selected by Dr. Thomson. They form part of Judah's speech in Gen. xlii. 32, "We be twelve brethren"—a very suitable motto for such a band of brothers as we ever proved ourselves to be.

'A feature of the "Theta" was that the members always arranged to get practically the whole day for their meetings. They met in the forenoon, opened proceedings with devotional exercises, conducted first any business requiring attention, and then devoted the time before dinner to discussion of the topic fixed for the day. After this, either in the study or round the manse dinner-table, they entered upon a round of

discussions *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*, in which Thomson's omniscient acquaintance with almost every known subject of interest to the ministerial mind made him *facile princeps* as a leader in our discursive talk. We were far from agreeing on many of the subjects raised, and often the debate grew fast and furious—especially, I am told, when I ventured to take part in it. However this may have been, I know that I and all my fellow-members could say of Thomson what Carlyle said of his friend John Sterling—we never “disagreed except in opinion.” Our views might be discordant on many subjects, but we always closed the debate as the best of friends.

‘The Club was never formally dissolved. After the Great War had lasted two years, regular meetings were discontinued, and instead, an annual gathering of members was held during the meetings of General Assembly in May, at Dr. Thomson's house. These gatherings were, I believe, continued till the year before his regretted death. I do not suppose they will ever be resuscitated. They could never be the same in the absence of the founder of the Club, who was not only its chief moving spirit, but the very backbone of the whole organization. During its existence some thirty-six members in all were for a longer or shorter period associated with the Club. Some of them have achieved more or less distinction in their several ways. Two became theological professors—G. A. Johnston Ross and Robert Law; and two became Doctors of Divinity—Dr. J. E. H. Thomson and Dr. Ewing of Edinburgh. Five others have gained some note as authors—Robert Mackenzie, Daniel Maclean, Charles Robson, T. E. Miller, and J. Keddie Graham. Others, although not altogether unguilty of more or less ephemeral publications, need not be mentioned here.

'Dr. Thomson's name figures on every syllabus of the Club with the exception of those for the years when he served as missionary in Palestine. Papers contributed to the Club formed the basis of his published works, *Books which Influenced Our Lord and His Apostles*, *Commentary on Daniel*, and *The Samaritans*. He took his fair share of the homiletic work, in which all the members participated, and joined effectively in every debate and discussion. A glance at the subjects he dealt with shows how wide and varied his outlook and interests were, and suggests the large and valuable part he played in promoting among his fellow-members an intelligent interest in some of the more important ethical and theological questions that were agitated in his generation.¹

'Much excellent work was done by other members of the Club. I venture to say that no one could scan the themes tabulated in the old syllabuses without forming a very favourable estimate of the standard of culture reached by this little group of comparatively little-known country ministers who, while faithfully

¹ It may be worth while to give in a note a list of these subjects: 1888, 'The Cherubim'; 1889, opened conference on 'Defects of Modern Preaching and how to remedy them'; 1890, 'Inter-Biblical Apocalypses'; 1891, 'The Sects of the Jews'; 1892, 'Historical Difficulties in the Book of Daniel'; 1893, 'External References to Daniel,' and 'The Four Empires of Daniel'; 1894, 'Homiletic Paper'; 1895, 'Ecclesiastes'; 1899, 'A Visit to the Samaritan Passover'; 1900, 'The Development of International History,' and 'The Things that make for Peace'; 1901, 'Margoliouth's *Lines of Defence of Biblical Revelation*'; 1902, 'The Psychology of Prophecy,' and 'The 119th Psalm'; 1903, 'The Historical Value of the Talmud'; 1904, 'Babel und Bibel,' and led the discussion on 'The Church Case'; 1905, 'The Authenticity of Isaiah xiii., xiv.'; 1906, 'Monotheism,' and in debate defended Imperialism against Mr. Wilson; 1907, 'The Conduct of Public Worship'; 1908, 'Is the Book of Daniel a Religious Novel?'; 1909, 'The Book of Daniel'; 1910, 'The Languages of Our Lord'; 1911, 'Prolegomena to Old Testament Criticism'; 1912, 'The Samaritan Pentateuch'; 1913, 'The Religion of the Samaritans,' and 'Art and Religion'; 1914, 'The Schools of the Prophets'; and 1915, 'After the War.'

discharging the duties of their office, found time monthly to devote to these studies. We have, *e.g.*, "Mohammedanism," "Tolstoi," "The Mysticism of Maeterlinck," "The Day of the Lord," "The Ethical Teaching of Thomas Hardy," "Pragmatism," "The Development of the Idea of Satan," "Ibsen"; and others perhaps more practical in their bearing, like "Church Union," "The Church and the Theatre," "The Church and Labour," "What should the Church do to reach the Non-church-going?" These are but samples of many similar subjects discussed during the thirty years of the Club's existence, but they serve to show that under the inspiring leadership of their head and founder, Dr. Thomson, these country ministers in the neighbourhood of Stirling and Dunfermline were men of considerable scholarship, and animated by a high ideal of what a Presbyterian minister's life might and should be.

'An attractive feature of our Club life was the annual summer excursion. At this gathering the wives of the members formed part of the company. The object of the meeting partly was to recognize the generous part played by the good ladies in their munificent entertainment of us monthly in their manse, and in rendering our social intercourse so bright and harmonious; partly also to furnish an opportunity for easy, frank fellowship for a few hours in scenes of a historic or romantic type not difficult of access from Stirling or Dunfermline. The first notice of such a meeting on the syllabus is in 1893. By that time our friend was happily married, and I rather think that auspicious and ever-memorable incident in his history led him to suggest the joint comradeship of the annual summer outing. In any case, I know that Mrs. Thomson was a never-failing

associate with him on these gladsome occasions, and helped greatly by her geniality to make them the success they proved to be.

‘ Speaking now not as a colleague and co-partner with Dr. Thomson in his inspiring work as a leader and developer of culture among his fellow-ministers, but rather as one who lived with him for almost half a century on terms of close friendship, I would like to say once more that it was his beautiful Christian character that rendered him so dear to us all, and made us value his friendship so much. Never have I known him speak an unkind word, or do a mean or ungenerous act; while in times of suffering and distress I have experienced as an unspeakable blessing his genuine sympathy and comforting fellowship. So, too, in times of prosperity and gladness of which he had certain knowledge, he was equally sure to manifest the reality of his interest and joy. I am sure that the like testimony would be borne by every member of the brotherhood.’

CHAPTER VIII

Marriage — Literary Work — *Books which Influenced Our Lord and His Apostles* — *Commentary on Daniel*.

FOR some years Thomson's mother had been in failing health. This was a matter of much anxiety to him, especially when he was absent on any of his more distant preaching expeditions. Early in 1892 her condition became serious. She lingered on until the 20th of December, when she passed peacefully away. Considering what they had been to each other for so long, we can in a measure imagine what this bereavement meant to one of his affectionate and sensitive nature. After the funeral he found sympathy and solace for a time in the house of a kind aunt in Helensburgh.

'This year,' he writes at the beginning of 1892, 'opens with small prospect in one sense of prosperity. . . . While I cannot say that God has dealt hardly by me, yet some things I would fain have had otherwise.' The year, as we have seen, brought him great sorrow, but it also saw the beginning of an influence that was to brighten all his further pilgrimage. Towards the end of December he became engaged to Miss Margaret D. Gray, daughter of Provost James Gray, J.P., Banker, Dalkeith. In the radiant glow of new love and hope he writes under December 31st: 'Sat up in my own room till the year came in. Writing to M. D. G.' The marriage took place at Dunallan, Eskbank, on March 22, 1893. 'Lovely day: perfect

in every way,' is Thomson's characteristic entry. The newly wedded pair spent the succeeding weeks in London, finding time even under these conditions for much profitable work in the British Museum.

During his Stirling years Thomson did not a little literary work. He prepared a *Concordance of the Scriptures* for Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode. He wrote many articles for the *Christian Leader*, a periodical edited by the Rev. Howie Wylie, with whom he formed a close friendship. He did work for the Religious Tract Society at the request of Dr. Kelly. Dr. Sinclair Paterson enlisted his assistance in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. For the *Stirling Journal* he wrote many reviews of books, especially critical and theological, and articles on kindred subjects, some of which were published in more permanent form.

While not neglecting severer studies, Philosophical, Theological, Linguistic, and Historical, he freely indulged his catholic taste in literature. Not only was he widely read in the poets; he knew 'himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.' His most ambitious piece, entitled *The Upland Tarn*, was published anonymously by David Douglas, Edinburgh, in 1881. It tells in musical verse a tale of love, treachery, and tragedy. The scene is laid among the familiar 'hill-foots,' under the shadow of the Ochils. His descriptions reveal true sympathy with Nature in her varying moods. The grandeur of the hills, the beauty of woodland and plain, the charm of dawn and the splendours of sunset, are caught and entangled in many of his lines. But all is skilfully wrought in subordination to the interest of the story, which never flags until the sorrowful close is reached.

The poem was received by the Press with a chorus

of praise. Speculation as to the author was rife. Many would have it that he was none other than Dr. Walter C. Smith, well known as the writer of 'Olrig Grange' and other poems—a compliment which Thomson warmly appreciated.

In the preface to his volume, *Books which Influenced Our Lord and His Apostles*, Thomson says that it owes its origin to a paper read to a Theological Club—the 'Theta.' So interesting did it prove that the members urged him to write a book on the subject. He hesitated for a time. The field was occupied already by the works of Schürer, Hausrath, Langen, Drummond, and Stanton. But considering the many points in which he differed from his predecessors, and the important bearing of the Apocalyptic books on the evangelic history, he finally undertook the task.

He explains that his primary purpose was to give an analysis and description of the little-known Jewish Apocalyptic books. To make this intelligible, it was necessary to exhibit their origin and setting. This involved a study of their connection with early Christianity. The study brought out clearly the intimate relation in which our Lord and His apostles stood to the school from which these books proceeded; and it became the main object of the work to show the links connecting the Jewish Apocalypses with Christianity.

Apocalyptic literature always possessed a fascination for Thomson, and his preparation for the work was very thorough. He would take nothing at second hand. Sound scholarship he held in high honour, but he was never overawed by 'authorities.' Positions supported by an array of 'great names' he judged to require specially careful scrutiny. He scanned the sources for himself and took full responsibility for his own conclusions. So we find in his diary such entries

as 'Translated Testimony of the Twelve Patriarchs,' 'Translated Assumption of Moses,' 'Wrote paper on Enoch.'

Published by Messrs. T. and T. Clark in 1891, the book was a distinct literary success. It at once took the place which it holds to-day as a standard work on the subject. Such a scholar as Professor Vacher Burch of Birmingham, writing in 1920, could say: 'Your book on Jewish Apocalyptic much impressed me when, as a young student, a comparatively few years ago, I read it, and awoke to the fact that the mind of Jesus must have been a sensitive one.' The book deserves to live if it were for nothing but the intriguing account it gives of the strange Jewish sect of the Essenes.

The book of Daniel may be taken as the starting-point of Apocalyptic literature. As such it came under notice in *Books which Influenced Our Lord and His Apostles*. Occasional papers read to the Theta Club show that this book was already with him a subject of serious study. The work went with him on his preaching tours. While in Orkney in June 1892, he 'wrote a paper on the Hebrew of Daniel.' He also worked at Chaldee, and two months later writes: 'Finished the Chaldee of Daniel.' In 1893 he contributed a series of twelve articles to *The Thinker*, on 'The Book of Daniel and Modern Criticism.' He was therefore well equipped for the task when he undertook to write the *Commentary on Daniel* for 'The Pulpit Commentary.'

Over this book battle royal has long been waged by opposing schools. The subject is one full of traps for the unwary. The problems, linguistic, literary, and historical, are more than usually complicated and difficult. Obviously one cannot do more than allude

to these here. One set of scholars maintain with much confidence that the writer of the book was not contemporary with the events he professes to record ; that the history is not authentic ; that in point of fact it was written in the time of the Maccabees to sustain the spirits of the Jews under the fierce persecution suffered at the hands of Antiochus Epiphanes. In effect, they declare it to be a patriotic and religious novel.

If this theory were fully established, Daniel might still be worthy of its place in the Canon. To prove this, it is sufficient to refer to the use made of parable. But the theory is not established. On the contrary, it is singularly open to attack ; and Thomson brings a mordant criticism to bear upon it. His method is to assail, point by point, the structure on which the theory rests, reducing it to ashes, so that the theory is left in the air, without visible means of support. When he gets into his stride, it is clear that the work exhilarates him.

As a scholar Thomson was neither reactionary nor obscurantist. With the principles and practice of sane criticism he had no quarrel. He was roused to antagonism by the extremists who, in name of scholarship, seemed to prefer their own conjectures to evidence ; while for those who took their criticism at second hand, complacently repeating parrot-like the conclusions of the extremists, he had something like contempt. He was indeed a higher critic himself. This is seen in his method of accounting for the book being written in two languages, Hebrew and Aramaic. He suggests that Daniel may have been originally compiled from fly-leaves, some of the tracts having been composed in Hebrew and some in Aramaic, while the whole was edited by some one who wrote the prologue. It is also seen in the cogent reasons he

gives for rejecting the authenticity of chapter xi. It may be said with confidence that no person is in a position to deal adequately with the questions raised by the book of Daniel who has not considered carefully the facts and arguments set forth in Dr. Thomson's *Commentary*. The book was published in 1897 by Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and Co., under the editorship of the Very Rev. H. D. M. Spence, D.D., Dean of Gloucester, and the Rev. Joseph S. Exell, M.A.

In accordance with his usual method, Thomson spared no pains in his investigation of the illness from which Nebuchadnezzar suffered. He appealed to his friend Dr. David Yellowlees, so long head of Gartnavel Asylum, and ex-President of the Medico-Psychological Society of Great Britain. The first letter received in reply, partly used in the *Commentary*, is of such interest as to justify its publication in full.

'Insane folk,' says Dr. Yellowlees, 'frequently imagine themselves changed into animals, and try to act like them. One lady now under my care, when remonstrated with some years ago for incessantly climbing on the furniture and jumping from it, replied to the nurse, "Do ye no' ken I'm a puddock?" Another patient, a man, barks like a dog.

'This, however, is quite different from Lycanthropia, which is an extremely rare disease, and which could indeed scarcely occur in any civilized land. The reported cases go back to the fifteenth or sixteenth century, when we read of persons suffering under wolf and dog-madness who abandoned their homes to resort to the forests, allowing their nails, hair, and beards to grow, and carrying their ferocity so far as to mutilate and sometimes to kill and devour children. In 1591 there were three men burned alive for such atrocities.

' I had one patient who had for years lived liker an animal than a human being—hair long and matted, finger-nails hooked, and nearly an inch in length, skin covered with caked dirt, and his whole aspect scarcely human.

' Such a creature three or four hundred years ago would have been treated like the brutes he resembled, "driven from men," forced to make his "dwelling with the beasts of the field," and compelled by hunger to feed like them.

' All insane folk who were not dangerous to others—for then these were killed without scruple—were in those remote days deemed to have lost the distinctive attribute of man, his mind, were regarded as brutes, and treated accordingly.

' Nebuchadnezzar's insanity was, in the language of to-day, an attack of acute mania, aggravated by the cruel treatment of his time. He was driven from men, had to seek food and shelter with the beasts of the field, and in his degradation and constant exposure he grew like them.

' It was not Lycanthropia properly so called. There is no record of the wolfish cruelty or dangerous violence that so often characterizes that form of madness.

' The complete record further indicates that the attack was an acute and transient one. The "seven times" did certainly not mean seven years; for recovery from that form of insanity would be most unlikely after so long a period. It is difficult to suppose that an Eastern Potentate could have been restored to his throne after a much longer time.'

CHAPTER IX

Clouds Rolled Away—Attracted to Missionary Work in Palestine—Ordination—The City Set on an Hill—Moslem and Jewish Social and Religious Life.

THE clouds that so long had shadowed Thomson's life had now definitely rolled away, and of 1894 we find him writing: 'This year has opened with hope for the future; feel much the goodness of God to me, and regard my work on Daniel as for Him. This may seem presumptuous, but He employs even the weakest.' The home companionship he now enjoyed was a perpetual stimulus and comfort. 'In the past year the happiest event was my marriage.'

This year also the first suggestion of Palestine as a possible field of missionary service came to him. In 1885 the Free Church of Scotland entrusted to Dr. David Watt Torrance the task of opening missionary work in Galilee. Headquarters were established at Tiberias, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, nearly seven hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean. With the growth of the Mission and increase of the European staff it became necessary to have some place in the mountains to which the missionaries might resort in the hottest of the summer months. The City of Safad, clearly seen from Tiberias, crowning the height of Mount Naphtali in the north, was in all respects most suitable. It is reputed the 'city set on an hill' referred to by our Lord. Some three thousand feet above sea-level, its climate is clear

and bracing. It was then reached from Tiberias by a mountain bridle-path, on horseback, in about four hours. There is a large population of Jews and Moslems among whom the missionaries could be usefully employed, while Tiberias could easily be visited when occasion required. Much success, however, could hardly be looked for from such intermittent effort. It was felt that, to conserve results and promote efficiency, some permanent occupation was necessary. Accordingly Mr. W. M. Christie—now the Rev. Dr. Christie of Tiberias—was sent out. A trained and thoroughly qualified teacher, and a remarkable linguist, Mr. Christie speedily organized a Boys' School, and in co-operation with a Syrian female teacher, a School for Girls, while devoting himself to the work of an evangelist. His most notable success was achieved among older lads and young men, a class whom to this day he has lost nothing of his power to attract and impress.

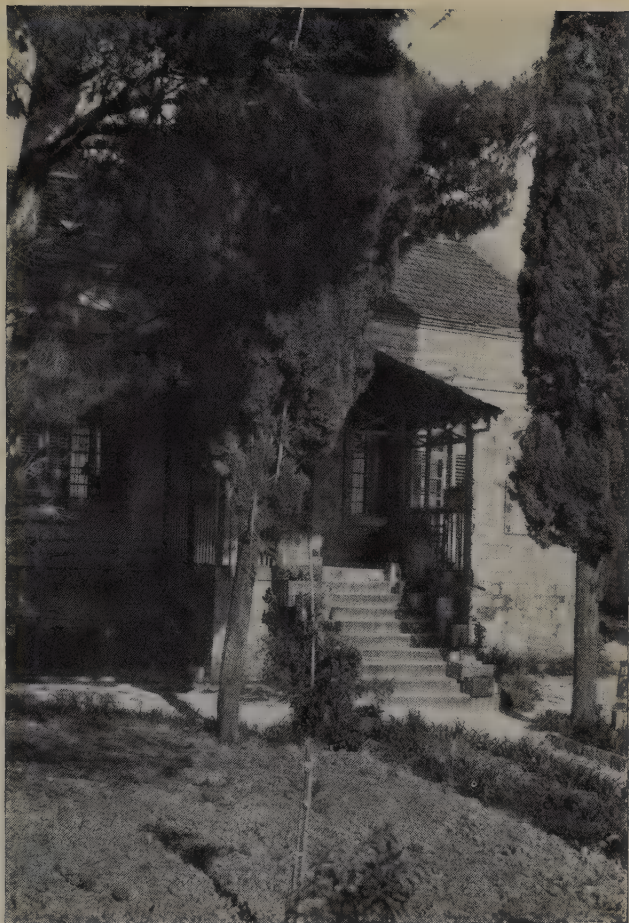
Miss Fenton, a Blairgowrie lady, had for some years been associated with Dr. Torrance in Tiberias, taking charge especially of the work for girls. The female school in Safad came under her supervision. Later she made her headquarters in that mountain city, where her gracious personality and strong common sense won for her a position of great influence. Unfortunately, in 1894, failing health compelled her to resign.

That same year Dr. Torrance came home on furlough. In his journeyings to plead the cause of the Mission he found his way to Stirling, and made his appeal in Allan Park Church. No one who heard Torrance speak could ever forget it. His methods were quite unorthodox. He made, indeed, careful, not to say anxious, preparation for his speeches. But

he would not be more than a minute or two on his feet when he seemed to 'catch fire.' His notes were forgotten, and in the glow of his enthusiasm he spoke out of the fulness of his experience. As he once put it to the present writer, he 'just blurted things out.' His obviously unpremeditated asides often brought the house down. There were no flights of imagination. You were kept in close touch with reality all the time. Whatever came uppermost was uttered, and the element of unexpectedness often seemed to lend point and wings to the arrows of appeal. Formless, one might say: yes, but for the purpose in view extraordinarily effective. He once declared in the Assembly that he had never asked for anything he didn't get.

After the Stirling address Mr. and Mrs. Thomson set themselves seriously to think. A lady missionary was wanted in Safad for the post vacated by Miss Fenton. Clearly in such a city there was ample scope for the energies of a clerical missionary. They had their beautiful home in Stirling, and life was enriched by relationship and the fellowship of many friendly souls. But there was nothing that rendered residence in this country imperative. They were in a position to give their services freely, without salary. Ought they not to volunteer for the work in Safad together?

With kindred interests and common outlook the prospect was congenial to both alike. Thomson's long engrossment with Oriental studies, his acquaintance with Jewish history and traditions, his interest in Palestine geography and archæology, all pointed in one direction. But for both the deciding factor was the joy of following in the Master's footsteps amid the scenes most closely associated with His life on earth, and of ministering there to His kinsmen after



DR. THOMSON'S HOUSE IN SAFAD

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the flesh. The decision brought gladness to their own hearts. At the head of 1895 stands the entry : ' Began this year with much happiness and hope. Have the design of going to Palestine if God shall open the way.' God did open the way. Dr. Torrance came in January and divided his time between tobogganing in the King's Park and discussing with them all the details of the project. The 20th of February brought news that their offer had been accepted, and succeeding months were occupied with preparation for their thrilling enterprise. Thomson's Bible Class, at a farewell meeting, as a token of gratitude and goodwill, made presentations to him and to Mrs. Thomson. On the 24th of April 1895 a great gathering was held in Allan Park Church, the brethren of the United Presbyterian Presbytery being joined by those of the Free Church Presbytery. The Rev. J. T. Gowanlock presided. The missionary elect, having answered the questions of the formula, kneeling, was by solemn prayer and laying on of hands by the Presbytery ordained to the holy office of the ministry and set apart for missionary service in the Holy Land. The Jewish Committee of the Free Church was represented on the occasion by the Rev. William Affleck of Auchtermuchty—later, in Edinburgh, a near neighbour and friend—and by the Rev. Dr. N. L. Walker of Dysart, who addressed the congregation. The venerable Dr. Frew of St. Ninian's pronounced the benediction.

In the month of September Mr. and Mrs. Thomson, accompanied by Dr. Torrance, his sister, and his little son—now Dr. Herbert Torrance—sailed from Liverpool for Alexandria. Much of Thomson's time on the voyage was occupied correcting proofs of his *Commentary on Daniel*. A short visit was paid to Cairo, with its entrancing Museum, and the Pyramids. They

travelled by rail through the Land of Goshen, along the canal to Port Said, and thence by boat to Haifa. They journeyed by carriage along the base of Mount Carmel, crossed the Kishon, passed through the oak forest at Harosheth, skirted the plain of Esdraelon, and climbed to Nazareth, encircled with her guardian hills. Nazareth could not be at its best in the absence of Dr. and Mrs. Vartan, who were then in Scotland on furlough, but two days were profitably spent in visiting the 'Holy Places' and making acquaintance with the missionary circle. The road to Tiberias was then little more than a track, and pretty rough at that. They risked it with the carriage, and reached the lake shore not much the worse, although considerably jolted and shaken. In the hospitable home of Mr. and Mrs. Soutar, the clerical missionary and his wife, they spent three days. From the balcony they saw the greater part of the sea. Southward lay the ruins of old Tiberias under the rock on which stood Herod's 'Golden House,' still known as 'The Palace of the King's Daughter.' Farther south are the famous hot baths—Emmaus of Josephus. On the mountain to the south-east are the remains of ancient Gadara, on the east the fortress of Gamala, and on the northern shore what is left of proud Capernaum. Great Hermon with crest of snow blocked the view to the north-east. Due north, on the summit of the mountain, the white walls of Safad, their future home, twinkled welcome in the October sun.

On the 18th of the month they set out on horseback, accompanied by Dr. Torrance, Mr. Soutar, and Mr. Najib Nassar, who acted as interpreter, along the sea-shore, past Magdala, over the renowned plain of Gennesaret, and up the rocky and difficult slopes to Safad. The rains had not yet fallen, so the air was

very dry, and eyes suffered somewhat from fine dust floating in the atmosphere. But the travellers were greatly charmed with their first sight of the city. A comfortable house of European workmanship which had been built on the west slope of the hill as a memorial to Mrs. Findlay of Glasgow, long a devoted friend to the Mission, was assigned as their residence.

Safad is hung like a necklace round the shoulders of a hill which is crowned by the crumbling ruin of an ancient fortress. It is visible from afar in the clear Syrian day. The view obtained from the summit is of wide extent and entrancing interest. On the west the mountain sinks steeply into a spacious valley, in the bottom of which opens a mighty gorge where, between high, precipitous walls, runs the Wady of the Mills. Beyond, the land rises swiftly to the mountain ridge of which the thickly wooded Jebel Zebud is the southern buttress, with the shapely cone of Jebel Jermuk in the north. This latter is nearly four thousand feet high, and is the highest mountain in Palestine proper. It may have been the scene of the Transfiguration. It is easily ascended from the north. The surrounding country in the time of Christ was studded with Jewish villages, whence a crowd of His own people might quickly gather to meet Him on His descent. This was impossible in the Hermon district, where the inhabitants were heathen. The comparison with the snow in Mark ix. 3, on which Dean Stanley founds an argument in favour of Hermon, even if it were genuine, would not tell against Jermuk. From that height the white bulk of Jebel-esh-Sheikh is the most striking object in all the landscape.

The great mass of Mount Naphtali falls rapidly through rugged and rocky slopes upon the pear-shaped sea and plain of Gennesaret in the deep hollow at its

southern base. In fair spring days, when surrounding hills are green, the waters are often a wonderful blue, almost realizing the description, 'a sapphire set in emeralds.' To the south-west are seen Mount Tabor, the Nazareth hills, with the highest houses of that favoured village, the plain of Esdraelon, and the dark green bulk of Carmel by the sea. Far off we descry the heads of Ebal and Gerizim, twin guardians of the pass at Shechem; while east of the Jordan Valley there come into view the fertile slopes and wooded heights of Gilead, the rolling downs of the Jaulan, and the high basaltic wall of the mountain of Bashan which protects the rich grain-fields of Hauran from encroachment of desert sand, the mighty fortress of Salchad, the Hebrew Salchah, standing out distinctly on the sky-line when the day is clear.

Some have thought that Safad represents the Tziphoth referred to by the Egyptian Mohar in his account of his travels in the fourteenth century B.C. It may be the Tsaphath mentioned by the Rabbis as a good place for signalling the appearance of the new moon; or perhaps Seph, which Josephus claims to have fortified in Galilee. A position of such strength, and such an excellent post of observation, has probably always been occupied, but there is no certain indication of a city here before the time of Christ. The castle built by Fulke in 1140 was destroyed by the Moslems in 1220, and later restored by the Templars. In 1266 Sultan Beybars obtained the surrender of the Christian garrison by treachery, and slaughtered them to a man. The gradual decay which then set in was accentuated by shocks of earthquake. The ruins became a quarry for stones to build the houses of the town, and now little is left of the once splendid stronghold.

During the sixteenth century a number of Jews

settled in Safad. They established a Rabbinical school which soon became famous : the teachers who lent it lustre being Spanish Jews—Sephardim. The Rabbis' labours were supported by a printing press which was under their control. Synagogues multiplied in number, and the city took rank as one of the ' Holy Cities ' of the Jews. The sense of sanctity was no doubt aided by the nearness of certain honoured graves. At Meiron on the western side of the valley, at the base of Jebel Jermuk, many celebrated Rabbis are buried, the most distinguished being Hillel, grandfather of Gamaliel, and Rabbi Simeon bar Yochai, to whom is attributed the writing of the book Zohar. Here are the ruins of a great synagogue, and a modern building over the tomb of Rabbi Simeon, which is a popular place of Jewish pilgrimage. Many cures, much more remarkable than any heard of at Lourdes, are confidently said to have been wrought at his shrine.

The Moslem quarter of Safad lies partly on the south-east slope and partly in the head of Wady Hamra, which breaks down southward, the rich bottom nourishing olive groves and mulberries. The Christian quarter is to the south-west. The Jews claim mainly the north-west slope ; that to the north-east is not so suitable for building, and is sparsely occupied. No reliable figures as to population were then available. In Government returns used for taxation, etc., the numbers were made as small as possible ; while for the purpose of appeal to the charitable in Europe and elsewhere there was a tendency to exaggerate. A rough estimate might give about 20,000. Some 7000 were Moslems, most of them Algerines exiled with Abd el-Kader, and reputed specially fanatical. There were not more than 500 Christians belonging to the Greek Church. Of the rest, while Spanish Jews—

Sephardim—were first in occupation, the great majority were Jews of Polish extraction—Ashkenazim—enjoying the protection of Austria.

The houses of Safad, fairly well built of stone and lime, with flat roofs of earth or concrete, standing on a steep declivity, have almost the appearance of terraces. This explains the fearful devastation wrought by the earthquake of 1837. Dr. W. M. Thomson, an American missionary who visited the city a week after the event with supplies from Beyrout for the survivors, gives a memorable description of that awful catastrophe in *The Land and the Book*. Of the total of 5000 who perished nearly 4000 were Jews.

For water the city depended almost entirely upon the rain caught from the roofs in great cisterns under the houses. Although so well situated for sanitary purposes, sanitation hardly existed. Open sewers ran down the middle of narrow and crooked streets. Into these were thrown all kinds of garbage and filth. The mess in winter and the conditions in the heat of summer may be left to the imagination. Sometimes the public road in front of one set of houses ran over the roofs of the houses lower down. This was the occasion of not a few troubles. It was said, *e.g.*, that the road gave way beneath a loaded camel, which was precipitated into the dwelling under it, receiving fatal injuries. The householder, hotly resenting this unwarrantable intrusion and destruction of his property, raised an action for damages against the owner of the camel. The latter promptly responded with an action against him for the loss of his camel !

The Suq, or market-place, was an oblong space well down the western slope surrounded by *dakkakin*, small open-faced shops wherein the grave merchants sat disposing of silk, cotton, linen, and leather goods,

various and brilliant in colouring. Hither in the rising day came the peasants and laden donkeys, to sell, with much shrill bargaining, their country produce to the townsfolk. In full public view the tradesmen plied their craft—the carpenter, the shoemaker, the tailor, the tinsmith, and the working jeweller ; while through the din there rang like a bell the music of the blacksmith's anvil. The centuries here had seen little progress in the art of printing ; and such bookbinding as was done was primitive in character. All the trade carried on was insufficient to maintain the population. A considerable percentage of the Jews were dependent upon the *Khaluqah*, the ' distribution,' which consisted of contributions sent by people of their race in many parts of the world for the support of their indigent brethren in the Holy Land. No doubt wise benevolence to the needy is a virtue, but on the whole this system could not be commended. It tended to produce a mean type of person, content to live on charity, void of independence and wholesome ambition. Being in the hands of the Rabbis, the ' distribution ' might serve disciplinary ends ; it might also become an instrument of tyranny.

The Sephardim, as might be expected from their history, were the more manly and robust in body and mind, wider of outlook and more tolerant of spirit. The somewhat crushed look, the shy, almost furtive manner of their kinsmen from eastern Europe, may be accounted for by their experience of oppression, persecution, and wrong in the lands of their sojourning. They were zealous, not to say fanatical, in their devotion to their religion, and scrupulous in the practice of its rites. Limited education and narrowness of outlook tended to make them secretive and suspicious.

Ritual purity does not always mean cleanliness, but the homes of the Jews are generally kept in good order. Among them family affection is strong. The honour and obedience paid by children to their parents are striking and beautiful. Monogamy is the rule, although cases of polygamy are still found among the Sephardim. Marriages are of course arranged by parents and guardians, and 'love matches' such as we know are rare. The tender age at which young people are often married has been made a subject of reproach. Whatever may be urged against the practice, one thing should be borne in mind. A daughter's sin against chastity inflicts a stain upon the family honour which only her blood can wash away. The Oriental parent, by the early marriage of his children, seeks to protect them and his house against this peril. He trusts, and not usually in vain, that propinquity and mutual good sense will secure for them their share of happiness in life.

The Moslems as belonging to the dominant religion hold their heads a little higher than Jews and Christians. Their houses are a trifle more substantial and spacious, as is necessary for the seclusion of their womankind. The furnishing is very simple, consisting mainly of rugs—often beautiful and expensive—on the floor, a diwan with cushions round three sides of the living-room, a cupboard in the wall for mattress beds, a receptacle for grain, and utensils for cooking and the making of coffee. Here also the family ties are very strong. Polygamy is not uncommon, and seclusion is perhaps not so rigorous as of yore. The present writer had once the dubious privilege of being introduced by a Safad man to his three wives. Strapping girls they were, and their husband was very proud of them. They seemed to be very good friends, and to

have him well in hand. But monogamy is the rule for the great majority, an increasing number preferring it, while many are prevented by poverty from maintaining more wives than one. Love of children is very marked, and is frequently more strong than wise, especially where first-born boys are concerned. Girls are never quite as welcome. Marriage takes place as early as among the Jews—particularly of girls—and the method of match-making is similar, at least for the man's first marriage. On subsequent occasions he may do the contracting himself.

The Moslems perform punctiliously the formal acts prescribed by their faith, and are liable to be carried away by sudden gusts of religious passion, the origin of which may be obscure to a stranger, and often may be due to things spoken or done by himself in ignorance and innocence of evil intent. In such an outburst here Lord Kitchener as a young man narrowly escaped with his life. And of course it is the plain duty of the incomer among them to treat with respect even what he may think their foibles and superstitions.

The little Christian community lived on good terms with their Jewish and Moslem neighbours. They were very friendly to the missionaries, and, especially in the early stages, their help was of great value. Their children have generally formed the bulk of pupils in the Mission Schools. The roll of ecclesiastical thunder scared them a little at times, but with the passing of the storm former relations were speedily renewed.

For generations education had been at a low ebb, that provided for boys being rudimentary in the extreme, while nothing was done for girls. Multitudes of intelligent men could not as much as sign their names; instead, they made a mark with a finger dipped in ink, or affixed the impression of a seal on

which their name was engraved. Indeed, a document was not deemed valid without the mark or impression, no matter how authentic the signature it bore. One suspects among these worthies some lingering of the old Bedouin contempt for the mere quill-driver.

The Christians were the first in the country to realize in some measure the importance of education. In consequence, at the time of which we write, they almost monopolized the positions where trained intelligence was required. It is a striking fact that in a land controlled by Moslems, in all Syria and Palestine, there was not a single Mohammedan in charge of a post-office or telegraph station. These were staffed entirely by Christians.

Before Mr. and Mrs. Thomson's arrival in Safad Mr. Christie had gone to Aleppo, having undertaken pioneer work there under the English Presbyterian Church. A Boys' School had been organized under an efficient Syrian teacher, attended almost exclusively for a time by Moslem boys. Only elementary subjects were taught, the language being Arabic. In an adjoining room met, usually in the afternoon or evening, a school under a Jewish teacher, in which Jewish boys learned Hebrew, English, arithmetic, and writing. The Girls' School was taught by the Syrian teacher, Amina Faris, the majority of the pupils being Moslems. Medical missionary work had also been begun, and was in the hands of Dr. Amin Fuleihhan, with two Jewish attendants. On Sundays there was Arabic service in the morning and English in the evening, the time varying with the hour of sunset.

While giving general superintendence to the work, Thomson devoted himself mainly at first to the study of Arabic. He was also assiduous in reading Hebrew. With the assistance of a Jewish scholar he gave much

time to the Mishna, which he describes as ' the most valuable, or at all events the least valueless ' portion of the Talmud, some acquaintance with which is essential for a Jewish missionary.

Mrs. Thomson entered with enthusiasm into the work for women and girls. With oversight of the school she combined a mothers' meeting attended only by Jewesses, where much useful information was given. Sewing was done, books were read, with conversation following.

In Safad there was a Station of the London Jews' Society, in charge of the Rev. Benzion Friedman, with Dr. Anderson as Medical Missionary. The agents of the two Missions maintained the most friendly relations, joint services being frequent. That held on Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, when Mr. Friedman presided and Dr. Thomson preached, was long remembered with pleasure.

CHAPTER X

Jewish Religious Customs—Observance of the Passover— The Burning at Meiron.

IN the spring of 1896 the Passover season, in which no work is possible, brought respite after the winter's toil. It also brought opportunity to see much that sheds light on the beliefs and habits of the Jews. Thomson's account of the observance of the Passover by the Jews of Safad will be read with interest :—

‘ Reading the account of the institution of the Passover in *Exod. xii.* in connection with what precedes, it appears as the culminating act of God's controversy with Egypt. Taken with the following portions of the Pentateuch, it is the covenant of God with Israel—the feast of espousals. No wonder, therefore, that Passover night has been reverently observed throughout the history of Israel. But the centuries have brought many changes into the service. In later days, while the lamb was still slain, the doorposts and lintels were not sprinkled with the blood. The lamb, roasted whole, was still eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, but there was no cry from the Egyptians to form a fearful background to the joy of Israel. In Jerusalem alone, in the days of the Kings, could the Passover be celebrated, because only in the Court of the Temple could the lamb be slain.

‘ I knew, of course, that during the Christian centuries great changes had been made in the ritual of the ordinance, but the precise form of the observance

now that the lamb could not be slain in the temple I did not know. An invitation from a Jewish friend to be his guest on Passover evening was therefore eagerly accepted.

‘ In preparation for the Passover all Jewish houses are cleared of everything leavened in the Jewish sense of the word. Singularly, the Jews do not recognize the identity of the process in raising bread by fermentation and making wine by the same means; hence wine is not excluded with the fragments of leavened bread. The work of cleansing is done by the women, but of purpose they leave a few crumbs on a shelf of press or cupboard. Before sunset on the night of the Passover the father and his son, or if he has no son, the husband of his eldest daughter, make the official cleansing, searching the house with lighted candles. The crumbs, found where they were left, are carried solemnly to the fire and burned. Is there not a reference to this practice in Zeph. i. 12—“ I will search Jerusalem with candles ” ?

‘ A famous Rabbi, Isaac Luria, who lived here in old days, ordered his wife to place ten crumbs of bread in ten different places. Then, with a wooden spoon in one hand and a feather in the other, he went, under his wife’s direction, to each of the ten places, said, “ Blessed be thou, O God, who hast commanded us to put away all leaven from our houses,” and solemnly swept the crumb into the spoon with the feather. When all were thus collected, he tied them up in a linen rag and committed them, spoon and all, to the flames.

‘ The Passover this year (1896) fell on the Christian Sabbath, but as the Jewish day is reckoned from sunset to sunset, the celebration took place after sundown on Saturday. My friend came for me at 8 P.M.,

and led me through the tortuous streets, then almost deserted, under the full splendours of the Syrian moon, everything being as clear as on a softened day. We reached a small door in the side of a house somewhat back from the street. We entered a tiny room pervaded with the smell of cooking. The room was vaulted, as are so many in Safad. Trees from which suitable beams might be made are scarce in Palestine. The second room entered was larger, and also vaulted. Here I was introduced to my friend's father-in-law, his mother-in-law, his wife, and two little daughters. We then passed into an inner room. A lamp hung from the vaulted roof, others were attached to the walls, and one stood on a short table in the middle of the room. On one side of the table was a low iron bedstead, with bed, etc., upon it. At the end next to the door was an arm-chair. On the side opposite the bed were three chairs, one for me, one for my wife, who unfortunately was not able to come, and the third for no less tremendous a person than the prophet Elijah. The Jews never sit down to Passover without thus symbolizing their expectation that even as they eat, the door may swing open and the prophet of fire stalk in to announce the advent of the Messiah.

'On the table before the arm-chair stood a tray of nickel—among wealthier Jews this is often of silver—and on it a thing like a tea-cosy lying on its side, covered with white crochet work. In this "cosy" my friend, S——, placed three Passover cakes. These are not unlike our hot-water scones, only rolled thinner and baked crisp. They are without salt, the Jews believing salt to be in the nature of leaven. The cakes were placed in the cosy one above another. The uppermost was called Cohen, "priest," the next Levi, and the lowest Israel. S—— then broke a piece from

the middle cake, and laid it under the pillow in the bed. For this he could give no reason. Sometimes the wife steals the bit, and gives it up only when promised something she wants. The stricter Jews carry this bit of bread on their shoulder for a few steps, to symbolize the carrying of the baking-trough.

‘S—— placed on the “cosy” a tiny cup containing a dark paste compounded of four fruits plentiful in Palestine, dates, raisins, pomegranates, and figs. The mass symbolized the clay from which the Israelites made bricks in Egypt. The fruits are four because in Deut. xxvi. 8 it is said that God delivered Israel from Egypt in four different ways—signs and wonders being reckoned as one. On one side of the cup was an egg, on the other a piece from the pith of a lettuce, and in front, opposite the arm-chair, a small bunch of green stuff said to be bitter herbs. S—— set down five glasses which he filled with white wine instead of the red wine commonly used. For this he apologized, saying that the red wine in the market was too strong. Finally he brought in water with which he filled a can.

‘The old man took his seat in the arm-chair, S—— on the bed, and I in my chair—all wearing our hats, for the Jews always pray and read the Scriptures with the head covered. The father took from his pocket a little tattered volume. S—— handed me a small Hebrew book, and took a similar one himself. He then asked the question enjoined by the law, “What mean ye by this service?” In answer the old man read from the tattered volume in Hebrew, beginning with the institution of the Sabbath (Gen. ii.) and proceeding down the history, taking the salient points. S—— accompanied him in a sort of chant. They

read at a tremendous speed, so that I had great difficulty in following.

‘ Reaching, after three or four minutes, the phrase, “ Blessed be thou, O God, who hast given us the fruit of the vine,” we all tasted the wine. It was unmistakably wine, not the unfermented juice of the grape. I asked S—— if they did not use unfermented wine. He did not know what I meant. I explained. “ But,” said he, “ that would not be wine.” When I said it was the fruit of the vine, he replied that it would not keep from October till the Passover.

‘ There was again a reading of the service book at the same breakneck pace ; again a point was reached where God was blessed for having given the fruit of the vine ; and again we sipped the wine. Two of the five glasses set and filled were for the wife and mother-in-law of S——, who sat behind us ; and each time we tasted the wine they were handed to the women, who gave a sip to the little girls.

‘ Many Jews, unfortunately, on these occasions are not content with a sip. They even fortify the strong red wine with brandy, and are often hilarious before the Passover is finished.

‘ Now S—— rose, took the can and a basin, and poured water over the hands of the old man, who cleansed them after the unsatisfactory manner prescribed by the Rabbis. S—— then did the same. One naturally recalled 2 Kings iii. 11—“ Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah ” ; and Mark vii. 3—“ All the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not.” Would that these washings were as thorough as they are frequent !

‘ Again we betook ourselves to the service book, and read a sentence blessing God who had spread a table for us. At this point the old man took of the bitter



SAFAD AND JEBEL JERMUK: MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION ?
(p. 131)

herbs, dipped the little bunch in salted water, and ate it. S—— and I followed his example. Fish from the Lake of Galilee was then served with potatoes. It was very good, but there appeared to be no sacred significance in this dish. Next came soup—also good, but also void of symbolic significance. Then a roast fowl was brought in, which, I learned, represented the Passover lamb. Generally a shank of lamb is used for this purpose. After another hand-washing we again read, blessed God for the fruit of the vine, and took a third sip of the wine. Once more the race over the ritual book began. At a certain point S—— brought out the hidden fragment of Passover bread. We read the final blessing of God for the fruit of the vine, and took our last sip of the wine. This is called the “end of the eating.” A little more reading of the prayer book, and the service was ended.

‘The four cups of wine, like the four fruits above mentioned, are said to symbolize the four ways of Israel’s deliverance from Egyptian bondage. This part of the ritual may be the same as in Christ’s time. If so, then probably this “end of the eating” was consecrated by our Lord for the solemn Communion service. Perhaps we may take it as confirmatory of this that in all accounts of the institution of the Lord’s Supper the wine is spoken of as the “fruit of the vine”: precisely the name given it four times in the Rabbinic ritual of the Passover.

‘The moon was high in the heavens, shining in unclouded splendour, as we walked homeward through still, deserted streets. Lights streamed from every house, and from most of the windows we heard the droning of the Jews reading the Passover service. Too often there were sounds indicating that some were exceeding in their cups. Now and again we heard

singing that had all the swing of German drinking songs. Certainly they were not songs of Zion. Through streets lighted up by as fair a moon our Lord and His disciples walked to Gethsemane. Did similar sounds of discordant revelry break in upon the solemnity of His farewell discourse ?

‘Intensely interesting the service was ; yet one could not but feel that all life had departed from the ordinance. It was as if one looked on the face of a mummy : the features are there ; but they are blackened, withered, dead.’

A striking feature of the Jews’ religion is the reverence paid to the memory of their great teachers. Thomson speaks of visiting, a fortnight after the Passover, certain tombs said to contain the dust of famous Rabbis. ‘It is the habit of the Jews in Safad,’ he says, ‘to spend the day of new moon after the Passover reading psalms, especially the penitential psalms, and liturgic prayers at those graves.’ At the synagogue of Rabbi Meir, near Tiberias, there is an annual gathering, when honour is done to the saint in strange ways. This festival, however, is but a reflection of the great yearly celebration at Meiron.

The book of Zohar, the source of the Cabbala, with its marvellous account of the hierarchy of heaven, the ten Sephiroth, and Adam Kadmon, with yet more marvellous reasons for its statements, moves the profound veneration of the Jews. The reverence paid to its reputed author, Rabbi Simeon bar Yochai, is equalled, says Dr. Thomson, ‘only by that of an Irish peasant for the Virgin. The centre of the worship, for so it must be called, is the sacred city of Safad, for at Meiron in its immediate neighbourhood is the Rabbi’s tomb. “The Burning at Meiron,” as the festival in his honour is called, is more important

actually to the Jew of Safad than the feast of the Passover or of Purim. If we were to understand the Jewish life in Safad, it seemed imperative that we too should see the Burning, which takes place on the thirty-third day after the Passover.

‘ We made a preliminary visit to the place in daylight a week before the festival. A ride of four miles through the exhilarating air, among the flower-sprinkled hills of Galilee, brought us to the square, solid building specially named Meiron, which much resembles a khan, the Eastern apology for an inn. By the narrow doorway we entered a courtyard surrounded by arches so strongly suggesting stalls that our horses and donkeys instinctively made for them. The keeper guided us through other doorways to a miserable, dirty little synagogue in which stands the tomb of the renowned Simeon. In a large domed apartment adjoining this is the tomb of Eliezer son of Simeon. Returning to the courtyard we ascended a rough stair to a platform through which rose the dome of Eliezer’s tomb. At the top of the stair stood the altar, if we may so call it, to Rabbi Simeon, about five feet high, resembling a baptismal font. Beside the dome was a similar altar to Eliezer; another at the outer door to Rabbi Ezra the Smith; and yet another outside to Rabbi Johanan has-Sandalar (the shoemaker). This last is beside a spring issuing from a cave in which the famous cobbler used to dip his leather. Near-by, a richly ornamented doorway marks the ruin of a synagogue dating from Roman times, with a tumble-down village close by. A little way off, in a cave on the lower slope of Jermuk, is the reputed tomb of Hillel. A pool of rain-water occupied all the entrance, so we obtained only a glimpse of sarcophagi piled on each other in the darkness within.’

On the day of the festival Mr. and Mrs. Thomson, Dr. Amin Fuleihhan, and attendants set out for the shrine an hour before sunset ; the road being difficult and somewhat perilous in the dark. There were signs of unwonted excitement in the Jewish quarter, an animal—mule, horse, or donkey—at every other door, heaped high with the variegated cushions on which the Jews delight to ride ; while at the point where the road leaves the city there was a crowd of animals that might have been taken for a horse and donkey fair. The road was already thronged with a motley company of pilgrims, men, women, and children, often two or more astride the same beast, and all in a feverish hurry. Clouds and a soft shower hastened the dark, but damped no enthusiasm. The worshippers were gathered from all parts of the Levant. Many of the Ashkenazim were gorgeously arrayed in long robes of striped silk, with great hairy caps, inherited from Russian ancestors. A striking contrast was afforded by the roughly clad Arabs and Arabian Jews, to which classes most of the muleteers belonged.

It was dark when the party reached the green sward in front of Meiron. ‘The whole inside of the khan-like building,’ says Dr. Thomson, ‘was aglow. We could distinguish one flaming cresset beside the altar of Rabbi Simeon. At intervals small rockets rose from the courtyard and flashed a little way into the heavens. Anon a blue light, or it might be pink, would overpower every other light, and, reflected on the rocks and grass around, gave a strange, unearthly aspect to the scene.

‘Through a swaying crowd, all jabbering vigorously in Yiddish, past a group of youths singing, shouting, and dancing to the music of a shrill pipe, we pushed to the doorway and into the courtyard. It was full

of people shouting, singing, and talking. From every corner rose a confused sound of piping, drumming, and murmuring. In the centre were stalls adorned with branches, for the sale of lemonade, oil, goods for burning, and sweets for the children. The arches were thronged with a noisy crowd who enlivened proceedings by letting off an occasional squib and kindling blue and pink lights. There was abundant light from numerous naphtha lamps, and from the cresset held aloft near the altar of Rabbi Simeon: yet all did not dispel the sense of present darkness due to the solemn vault of black sky that bent overhead.

‘At the top of the stairway, on the platform round the main dome, we found the blazing cresset upheld by a stalwart youth whose bare arms were shining with the dripping oil. On the altar of Rabbi Simeon lay shawls steeped in oil. Beside it on a small box stood a man with a long beard, in a blue robe that reached his heels. This man, a Safad shopkeeper, had paid ten napoleons for the right to preside at the altar. Let no one think that he did this in honour of Rabbi Simeon. It was a strictly mercantile transaction. Before any worshipper could place an offering on the altar he had to pay at least a couple of bishliks—a bishlik=6d.—to this mercantile high priest.

‘Along the sides of the platform were little domed rooms, rented to visitors at high prices. The tents pitched behind the main dome were occupied by merry worshippers, who hung up lamps of coloured glass which made a pretty light through the canvas. To secure a better view when the burning should begin we climbed to a platform over the rooms. It was a comfort to see several stalwart Turkish policemen here to keep order. Many spectators, including

whole families, were standing, sitting, and reclining around. A Jewish family usually involves three generations. One man who had reached the affectionate stage of inebriety was pressing offers of arak or brandy on his kinsfolk, or fetching water for the numerous children, his own, or his brothers' or sisters', that completed the family. Jewish children seem to be as continually thirsty for water as their seniors are for something stronger. We saw a man pouring liquid from what looked like a wine bottle over the heap on the altar. "Do they pour wine on the sacrifice," we asked, "as they did of old in the temple?" "No," answered the Jew questioned, with a twinkle in his eye, "they pour the wine into their mouths!"

'We were greatly struck with the extreme beauty of many of the countenances. The young men had almost a feminine delicacy of feature and complexion. One young matron near us, with a lively little infant in her arms, was lovely enough to have stood as a model for a Madonna. The motley character of the crowd also impressed us. One man had all the look of a Hindoo; he was probably from the Persian Gulf. Some came from Mosul, some from Ispahan. Several Russians and Poles were there who could afford to travel from Kiev or Warsaw and hire rooms in the synagogue. France, Austria, and Germany were liberally represented, also Egypt and Tunis. Later on, a voice behind me said in English, "What do you think of that, my friend? It's better than any theatre in New York or Chicago." The speaker was a young American Jew who sometimes borrowed books from us.

'Meantime the crowd gathered closer round the altar, and the heap of offerings on it rose higher, not without occasional bickerings over the bishliks due

from the worshippers. One man poured oil on the heap surreptitiously, for which the man in the blue robe would clearly have fain taken vengeance on him with a stick ; but the presence of the Turkish policemen had a soothing effect. At intervals the cresset was replenished from the heap on the altar, and the light damped down only to blaze out more fiercely. Cressets had by this time been lit by the altars of Rabbis Eliezer, Ezra, and Johanan, the last casting a ruddy glow on the grave outside. It was now past ten o'clock. Away across the valley the lights of Safad began to twinkle. From each of its many synagogues rose a little tongue of fire, the largest being from the burning place before the synagogue of Luria, on which are painted in blue letters the words " Rabbi Simeon bar Yochai."

' About eleven o'clock Schmael, the doctor's dispenser, solemnly announced, " Rabbi Raphael has gone to wash himself !" Raphael is Chief Rabbi of the Ashkenazim in Safad. This struck us as a salutary act on his part, but not calling for remark from us. Seeing this, Schmael added impressively, " He washes himself to light the fire : it will be in half an hour." We passed the interval observing the crowds on the roof. Some walked about, others squatted in circles drinking and playing cards with the help of an inch or two of candle stuck in a bottle. Men, women, and children were huddled about in every direction, reclining on the grass that covered the flat roof like a green sward. It is said that much immorality occurs at Meiron. Certainly opportunity is not wanting.

' Our attention was recalled to the lower platform, and an arresting sight it was. The whole platform surged with a struggling, elbowing mass of humanity, singing a peculiar chant, and keeping time by clapping

their hands. The flaring yellow light of the three cressets fell upon the bright garments of the men and women, especially on the blue robes of the "high priest," and, flickering on the white domes of the building and on the strange faces of the worshippers, formed a weird spectacle, never to be forgotten. The Rembrandtesque effect of the scene was deepened by the starless vault of black sky overhead.

'The crowd were eager that Raphael should be summoned to light the pile. A stormy altercation broke out between them and the "priest," who objected to shortening the harvest of bishliks. Before the chanting began, he had added to the picturesque dignity of his appearance by wrapping a bright red handkerchief round his head. This he now reluctantly removed and placed in the cresset. At this point the bent form of Rabbi Raphael was seen moving through the crowd. At a signal from him, the lad who held the cresset inclined it down towards the huge pile of oil-saturated garments on the altar. This was done in the name of a Rabbi in Russia who had paid thirty napoleons for the honour of having his name associated with the burning: an honour for which as much as fifty napoleons has been given.

'The excitement now became intense. Sticks were stretched out to pull the flaming clouts from the cresset down upon the precious pile that rose from the altar, various in colouring and gleaming with oil. As it took fire the flames shot up from every corner of the heap, and burning oil ran down to the pavement in beads of flame. A couple of youths with pipes and one with a drum gave a little definition to the music, and dancing was added to the singing and clapping of hands. Old, grey-bearded Rabbis clasped each other and waltzed around to the inspiring

strains, their flowing robes and long beards grotesquely keeping time to their movements. One figure drew our attention by the vigour of his solitary gyrations. He wore European dress—a wideawake hat, blue jacket, and tweed trousers. From his height he seemed a mere boy, but the light falling upon him revealed the withered face of an old man.

‘More and more importunate became the chant, the words of which may be translated thus: “Son of Yochai, blessed art thou, anointed with the oil of joy above thy fellows.” The first two words, “Bar Yochai,” formed the burden of the song, rising now in tones of impassioned entreaty, and again sinking to a wail. One naturally thought of that scene nearly three thousand years ago, when on another “Place of Burning,” only thirty miles away, the prophets of Baal shouted “O Baal, hear us”: and of the citizens of Ephesus crying out for the space of two hours “Great is Diana of the Ephesians.”

‘As the flames mounted into the air and the heat compelled the worshippers to fall back, we saw more clearly those who placed their offerings on the blazing pile. At times there was a touch of real pathos. Every one knows how keen is the desire of Jewish women to bear children. Those who are denied this blessing eagerly long for the Burning at Meiron. An offering on the altar of Rabbi Simeon, accompanied with prayer—not a request to God, but some liturgic phrase—is regarded as an infallible specific. We saw one comely woman of about thirty-five take from her bosom a silken shawl, drench it in oil, and throw it on the burning pile. The pile was high and the flame fierce. She threw with all her might, but the shawl failed to reach the top. Despite the heat she rushed in and caught it as it fell. Four times she renewed

the effort in vain. Then some men with their sticks caught the shawl and thrust it well into the blazing mass. Her face was radiant as she turned away. From remarks by our neighbours we learned that others were offering on behalf of their children.

‘Scanty offerings were laid on the altars of the other Rabbis, but oil was plentiful. As the fires on that of Rabbi Simeon burned low, and the chant of “Bar Yochai” grew less tumultuously strong, a youth stepped forward and pronounced a panegyric on the munificence of the Russian Rabbi whose name was associated with the burning.

‘At this point we determined to leave and make our way across the valley to Safad. The stair, innocent of railings, with crowds bustling up and down, was negotiated with difficulty. All about the passages men and women lay stretched on the pavement. We saw in the adjoining rooms—for doors there was none—the floor of each covered with sleepers of all ages and both sexes, under the light of a great lamp suspended from the roof. Others at the cost of a bishlik secured a room in the village for the night, while many were content with the grass for a bed and the bushes for shelter.

‘About midnight we set out in darkness, but when half-way home the moon shone out in all the brilliance of a Syrian night. We reached Safad at two in the morning, and looking back through the moonlight we saw that the fires of Meiron were still burning.

‘Next day we witnessed a new series of ceremonies: perhaps the most interesting being the “hair cutting.” The father brings his little boy and pays a fee to the Rabbi, who proceeds so to cut the lad’s hair as to leave the cherished lovelocks, one on each side of the face. Thus the Ashkenazim obtemper the command,

“Ye shall not round the corners of your head.” That no one may accuse them of rounding the corners they prolong them into attenuated ringlets. The cutting complete, the father mounts his son upon his shoulder and goes prancing round the fire of Rabbi Simeon. Of course, an offering is burned for each “victim,” and equally of course, arak and brandy are consumed.

‘We remarked to a Jew upon the melancholy spectacle we had witnessed. He assured us that Abraham and Isaac, David and Solomon had all frequented Meiron. Asked for his authority, he replied that Luria said so. This Luria died some three years ago (1893): he was a great cabbalist, who seems to have said many things hard to be believed.

‘The burning of garments in honour of the saints is connected with the hope of receiving benefit from their intercession. Sad it is to see the descendants of the great patriarchs reduced to the level of heathen.’¹

¹ *Macmillan's Magazine*, lxxiv., 1896, pp. 428 ff.

CHAPTER XI

The Way of the Missionaries—Eager Youths—James Cohen
—Nathan Wiseman—Local Practices—Doctor of Divinity.

IN 1896 Dr. George Wilson, nephew of Dr. J. H. Wilson of the Barclay Church, Edinburgh, who had been assisting Dr. Torrance in Tiberias, was appointed Medical Missionary in Safad. He and Mrs. Wilson formed a welcome addition to the little community. Mr. Thomson frequently conducted a brief service with the patients assembled on clinique days to see the doctor. It was a curious, not to say disconcerting, audience to address. Some sat with grave inattention, others had their ears literally stopped; others were critical and inclined to argue points. There was no hesitation to interrupt and interject remarks. But one could always count on a few who listened with respectful interest. No doubt, also, there were those who thought that by sitting out the service they had earned the right to medical advice and medicine free.

From the beginning the missionaries had made it plain that they would have nothing to do with anything surreptitious or underhand, or anything that could be construed as bribery, to induce the people or their children to come to the Mission, or to gain a welcome for themselves and their message. They were frankly and without disguise ambassadors of Jesus Christ, obeying His behest, and seeking by their teaching and life to commend the Master and His Gospel to all alike. While using every legitimate

means to win acceptance for the truth, they were careful not needlessly to offend the susceptibilities of those to whom they were sent. In proportion as a man values his own faith, so will he respect the religious convictions, even prejudices, of others. If these people believed that the Mission was a danger, a source of pernicious influence threatening the peace and unity of their homes and society, it was no matter for reasonable complaint if they took strong measures in self-protection. The *cherem*, or ban, might then be freely employed. But no matter how strong and violent the opposition, it could be met only by methods straight and honourable. Anything else would contradict the fair spirit of Christ. How should we feel if strangers came hither with a doctrine hateful to us, and sought by intrigues and gifts to entice our children away? But the purpose of Christ would have been singularly belied had no attempt been made to relieve the poverty and distress that were so much in evidence. To heal the sick and succour the needy was to follow in the Master's footsteps. No conditions were attached to these benevolences. The patient who was healed came under no obligation but that of gratitude. The children who received warm garments against the winter cold were not bound to attend school, nor was the attempt made to lure them thither without the knowledge of their parents. But the missionary character of the enterprise was never concealed, and the people were taught that these things were done because 'the love of Christ constrained.'

According to Eastern practice, the different religious communities reside in separate quarters of the city. There is a certain amount of intercourse between them in the market, but there is no interchange of social civilities. Their religions hold them apart, and are

the source of perpetual antagonisms. They regard each other with mutual suspicion and hostility—a sort of armed neutrality that easily breaks into strife. In the Mission they discerned a common danger. They were much torn, however, between the desire to enjoy the benefits it offered and the duty to avoid religious contamination. Their attitude oscillated between the extremes of great friendliness and violent opposition, with intervals of quiescence that almost seemed indifference. After a period of quiet, with thronged benches and prosperous work, for some comparatively trivial cause a *cherem*, or ban, would fall like a bolt from the blue. Pupils vanished, and only a tenuous company appeared at the dispensary. Such situations required tactful handling, but patience and good temper invariably prevailed. Tentatively, timidly, ones and twos began to come back. Gradually the ban was forgotten, and, with gathering courage, schools, evening classes, mothers' meeting, and clinique became as popular as ever.

Thomson's greatest opportunity was found in the evening classes attended by Jewish and Moslem youths, and splendidly he improved it. His learning, his sincerity and kindliness, won their affection and confidence. Study of their ancient history and literature paved the way of approach to the Gospel, disarmed prejudice, and removed misunderstandings. They advanced with exhilaration to the discovery of new worlds of thought and vital interest. It was a spring-time from the sowing of which fruit is being gathered to-day.

In connection with these classes came some of the most trying experiences. These youths had reached an age when some independence might reasonably be claimed. It was their own desire to learn what might

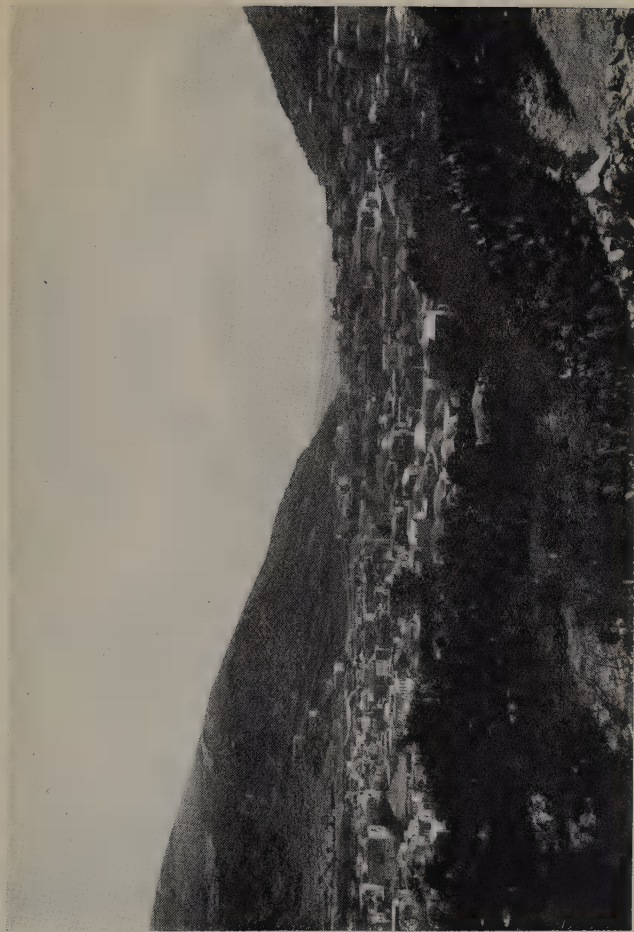
equip them to play a worthier part in life. With growing knowledge came widening of outlook, and the dawning of a new responsibility. Inevitably the great things of the faith came under scrutiny and discussion. The instructed mind could not evade a sense of answerableness for the judgment reached. Some grew impatient of the bonds of their traditional religion. One and another desired a fuller acquaintance with the Christian Gospel, and were inclined to its acceptance.

Unhappily the spirit of persecution is confined to no one country or system of belief. When one changes his religion it may be the occasion of grief and vexation to his friends. But after all, his religion is his own affair, with which others have no right to interfere, especially with violence to the person. These lads were entitled to think and choose for themselves. Aware, however, of the fanaticism prevailing in both Jewish and Moslem communities, they made their intercourse with the missionary as inconspicuous as possible. They could not quite avoid suspicion: watch was set upon them, and at times they suffered bodily injury. Ways were found to make life burdensome to any one who showed leanings to the new faith. Among the Moslems the youths were not allowed to forget that the penalty of apostasy was death. The missionaries were under the protection of Britain, but they might be struck at through their Syrian agents. One teacher was kept in a noisome prison for many weeks on a trumped-up charge which the judge believed as little as the men who made it. But with a little baksheesh most things were then possible in Palestine.

The lads most strongly drawn to Christianity were daunted by the formidable opposition they would meet in Safad should they profess conversion. For the Jew it meant severing the dearest earthly ties, and sub-

jection to unmeasured insult, violence, and contempt ; while every obstacle would be put in the way of his earning a livelihood. The Moslem, as we have seen, could expect no mercy. They were eager for help to go to Egypt, Great Britain, or America, where conscience might be obeyed at less fearful cost. Those who have no experience of such conditions should not too readily judge the lads as weak in faith or lacking in courage. Several succeeded in getting away, and have since given a good account of themselves in the world. One we cannot omit to mention here who endured the storm of obloquy and anger and lived to witness a brave testimony to the children of his own people.

James Cohen was born in the Jewish community and reared in its faith, practising its customs and studying its literature. In his intercourse with Mr. Christie, Mr. Soutar, and Dr. Thomson, he was led to a knowledge of Jesus Christ and His Gospel. He did not shrink from confession by baptism. Vials of wrath were poured upon him as one who had apostatized from the faith of his fathers, and the bitter feeling against him was slow to die. But in the end his quiet fidelity, upright character, and friendly spirit won for him the respect even of the most hostile. Having given good proof of his fitness for the sacred office, he was ordained to the ministry by the Presbytery of Sidon. He continued to labour, chiefly in Tiberias, with notable devotion until the outbreak of the Great War. As an Ottoman subject there was no protection for him. He was at the mercy of the Turks. For a time he was permitted to stay in Tiberias, but finally, suspected of sympathy with the enemy, if not of espionage, he was carried away and treated with such inhuman barbarity that he died



NABLUS: ANCIENT SHECHEM
(p. 170)

in the hands of his oppressors. Beautiful and fragrant is the memory he left us.

It may illustrate the light and shade in missionary life to tell another story of a different character. Nathan Wiseman, as a young Jew in Hamburg, professed conversion and was baptized by a German pastor in that city. In search of work he went to America. After some nine months he recrossed the Atlantic, and with the purpose of becoming a missionary to the Jews he entered upon a course of training at Guinness's College in London. Here his health broke down. Seeking a warmer climate, he found his way to Jerusalem, and was received into the hospital there. His trouble was diagnosed as phthisis, continuous treatment for which could not be given in that institution. Wiseman then went to Safad, where he conformed to all Jewish practices and married a Jewish wife. This woman soon tired of the sick man, and secured a divorce. Nothing discouraged, he found another, a very bigoted Jewess, who was willing to marry him. Somewhat recovered in health, he went down to Tiberias, and acted as dispenser to Dr. Torrance. Here he renewed his profession of Christianity, and Mr. Soutar received him back into the fellowship of the Church. Having regard to his education and intelligence, he was put in charge of the book depot and stationed in Safad. It transpired that he had fallen deeply into debt in Tiberias. He faithfully promised to incur no debts in Safad, and on this condition Dr. Wilson advanced the money needed to pay his creditors. All seemed to go well for a time. Wiseman was useful in the dispensary and in translating Dr. Thomson's addresses into Yiddish for the patients. The keen mountain air, however, did not agree too well with him, and after

about eighteen months he had an alarming attack of blood-spitting. He appeared to be dying. The Jews came crowding to the house where he lay, with much excitement and tumult, shouting opprobrious epithets. The patient showed signs of recovery, to the disconcerting of his kinsmen; and a report was circulated that he would poison all of them who went to the dispensary!

Dr. Wilson took the sick man into his own house and made arrangements for conveying him to Tiberias hospital, whither he went with him all the way. The winter was coming on, and Tiberias would be much milder than Safad. But in Safad also Wiseman was in the midst of perpetual worries. In spite of his promise he had got into debt again. The hostility of the Jews was always breaking out afresh. His wife, a superstitious Jewess, was no help to him. For fear of the evil eye she refused to bring his only child to see him before he left for Tiberias. She was persuaded that a sure way to avert the malign influence of the evil eye was to keep the child secluded from the light of the sun for a year!

The rest of the story may be told in Dr. Thomson's own words: 'We went down to Tiberias on the 25th of January (1896), and there I heard disquieting rumours about Nathan Wiseman. It was persistently asserted that he was going to revert to Judaism again. He was about to be moved to a house which he had taken in the town. He had had several attacks of bleeding at the lungs, and was regarded as being in a very critical condition. I saw him on Tuesday the 26th, and he then professed his faith in Christ; but he spoke angrily of the Wilsons. The following day he had an attack of bleeding. Mr. Soutar and I saw him. He expressed his desire to be buried as a Christian, and

requested Mr. Soutar to look after his boy. In the afternoon, with his own consent, he was removed from the hospital to his house in town. Later we heard that he had sent a petition to the Jewish authorities praying that he might be buried as a Jew. On hearing this, Dr. Torrance, Mr. Soutar, and I, accompanied by a Jewish representative and the head of the police in Tiberias, went to his house, and there, in our presence, he declared his desire to die a Jew, not a Christian. The questions were put to him in English, Yiddish, and Arabic, and there was no dubiety about his answers. We then solemnly shook hands with him. He looked at us with absolute astonishment.' The contrast between the gentle and affectionate, if sad, farewell and the treatment he had received at the hands of his kinsmen could hardly fail to impress the dying man.

The extent of Wiseman's indebtedness in Safad came out day by day after he went to Tiberias. Dr. Wilson was naturally annoyed, and wrote him a somewhat severe letter. This Wiseman resented, and it may have been the immediate occasion of his reversion to Judaism; but failing this, Wiseman would doubtless have acted upon some other. Thomson might well describe it as 'a very sad and disheartening case.'

Work was often interrupted by feasts, fasts, and holidays during which the Mission was deserted. This left the missionaries free to observe what was going on, and also to make some lengthened journeys. The autumn Feast of Tabernacles is strictly observed, the Jews then living in temporary booths constructed of wood and branches. Dr. Thomson speaks of witnessing the rejoicing over the law with which the Feast ends. 'We visited one of the synagogues,' he says, 'and saw

the whole ceremony of carrying the law round the building to be kissed, and then dancing before the ark or press in which the rolls of the Torah are kept. Throughout the Feast the Jews walk around in their finest clothes. The rejoicing is often marked by immoderate drinking.

‘On the evening of New Year’s Day the people arrayed in all their finery went up to various points on the hill of Safad whence they could see the Lake of Tiberias. There, in sight of the blue waters, they read psalms and prayers, and, having shaken their robes, imagined that all their sins were cast into the depths of the sea.

‘A week later comes the Great Day of Atonement, Yom Kippor. The intervening time is spent in preparation for the rites of that solemn day. It is a saddening sight to see the Jews in their synagogue lamenting over the loss of the temple, the priesthood, and the sacrifices, and to witness the abjectness of the ceremonies they have introduced in place of the rites that can no more be solemnized. On the morning before the Day of Atonement a strange ceremony is performed which I think must have a heathen origin. Every Jew and Jewess brings a cock or hen, according to the sex of the worshipper, and it is slain for them by the slaughtering Rabbi.’

One ceremony of infrequent occurrence Thomson was fortunate in seeing. It is called ‘The Renewal of the Sun.’ He says: ‘The Jews have in connection with their calendar a cycle of twenty-eight years. Some of the more credulous imagine that at the beginning of each cycle a totally new sun is created. Having been duly warned, on the morning of the festival Mrs. Thomson and I rose long before day-break. We saw the Jews thronging up the castle hill,

and stepping out we followed them. All were in the greatest haste, as if fearing lest the new sun should be risen ere they reached the top. One old man I thought would die, he got so out of breath. Pressing upward, we found the Jews crowded on all the mounds that represent the ruined walls of the castle, straining their eyes as they gazed eastward over the hills of the Jaulan. At length a gleam as of fire appeared above the dark mountain range, and at the signal the assembled Jews poured forth a jabber of words addressed to the rising sun. The ceremony lasted about ten minutes. The company indemnified themselves for their early toil by much drinking of *Schnapps*: the breeze from the hill was like the breath of a drunken giant.'

The ingenuity of the Rabbis was severely taxed to account for an epidemic of typhoid which had broken out in the town. They judged that it was due to 'some sin committed by a member or members of the Jewish community. Inquisition was made, and two young men of bad character were rebuked before the synagogue. A woman deserted by her husband, who supported herself by keeping a shop, was also summoned, it being against the law as laid down by some Rabbi for a woman in such circumstances to keep a shop. She refused to come, and was, I understand, excommunicated. It was of course regarded as a sin to attend our classes. Women were forbidden to go out at nights, lest they might be tempted to sin. This meant that they could not go to Mrs. Thomson's class, which accordingly was closed.

'The means taken to check the fever were ludicrous, and at the same time pitiful. One certain cure was to put charcoal marks in a special pattern on the door of the patient's house. To drive the fever away a peculiar ceremony was carried out away down in the

Jewish cemetery. A tent was pitched among the tombs, and under a canopy there a young man and woman were married. I cannot learn why this ceremony is supposed to have any effect upon the fever. Nothing either in the Bible or in the Talmud seems to be appealed to as giving it sanction.'

When bribery and corruption with intrigue prevail in all circles, as they did in those days, one learns to expect little in the way of high-principled conduct. One Governor of Safad, who had been implicated in the massacre of Armenians at Van, was not *persona grata* with the Governor-General of the province. He could not be sure of his position for any time. He sought therefore to make hay while the sun of opportunity shone. From the doctor then in charge of our medical work, an Armenian Protestant, he demanded fifty napoleons. Failing payment, the doctor was given to understand that he would be accused to the Government of some imaginary crime, when, instead of paying fifty napoleons, he might expect to be beggared. The intervention of a powerful friend scared off the official bandit.

A Jew had borrowed money from a German in Haifa, and pledged a house to him as security, a certain rate of interest being agreed upon. He paid no interest. When the German came to take the house, the debtor declared that it was not his to pledge. He was but one in a family of several members, and, moreover, had already pledged his share of the house to others. The German's case, however, was strong. The title-deeds were in the name of the borrower, and had been given over to the creditor. Herr Maas, the German carpenter in Safad, acted as the creditor's agent in getting the Jewish occupants of the house evicted. It was certainly hard for those who had

paid money to this rascal for permission to stay there. Of course, in trusting a rogue they had only their own folly to blame. But it is instructive to note that the local indignation was vented on Herr Maas. No one seemed to think the real culprit had done any wrong.

Robberies for a time were fairly frequent. One of the richest synagogues in the town was broken into, and all the gold ornaments and the silver cases containing the sacred rolls were taken away. But the heads of the synagogue knew their business. A substantial baksheesh was paid to the authorities, and the stolen goods found their way back to their owners. The people roundly accused the head of the police of being confederate with the thieves. He took no action in the matter. Discretion was the better part of valour.

A band of gipsies visited the town. Dr. Wilson's house was entered and valuable jewels stolen. Mrs. Wilson saw a woman in her bedroom, but did not think there was time for her to take anything. In this she was mistaken. There was little doubt as to the culprit. Several arrests were made. The prisoners were tried and tried again in Safad. Finally they were despatched to Acre, there to 'thole their assize' in the court of the Mutesarrif. There was some show of action, and Dr. Wilson was summoned to give evidence. But of course nothing came of it, and the jewels were not seen again. Knowing ones, however, had no doubt that the loot was safely in the hands of the police.

In the midst of many occupations while in Safad Mr. Thomson found time to complete the Introduction to his *Commentary on Daniel*. This was sent to the publishers in the autumn of 1896. The following year he had the honour of receiving the degree of Doctor

of Divinity from the University of St. Andrews, in recognition of the valuable contribution he had made to Theological Learning in his volume, *Books which Influenced Our Lord and His Apostles*. Owing to his residence in Palestine, the degree was conferred *in absentia*.

CHAPTER XII

Galilee—Samaria—Jerusalem—Hebron—Beyrout—Baalbek
—Damascus—The Scottish Triumvirate—Mount Hermon.

DURING the enforced holidays referred to above, Dr. Thomson made good use of his opportunities to gain personal acquaintance with many scenes of historic and sacred interest in the Holy Land. Journeying on horseback was a leisurely business compared with the rush by motor-car to-day. But there were compensations. The rider could linger at will for careful observation and quiet reflection which are lost for the motorist. A superficial impression at best can be gained by one scouring through the hills at a rate of sixty miles an hour.

In the spring of 1897 Dr. and Mrs. Thomson spent a week in travelling from Safad to Jerusalem. The first part of the way to Nazareth, over a gorge-torn mountain track, resembles the ascent and descent of a series of isosceles triangles, and very rough at that. The declivities were spangled with myriads of bright-hued flowers, cyclamen and many-coloured anemones prevailing. Darting lizards flashed from rock to brake, whence arose clouds of chattering sparrows. A pretty group of wild gazelles grazed peacefully in a green hollow. Near the watercourses shrike, bee-eater, and kingfisher plied their busy tasks, while here and there a solemn stork viewed the passing cavalcade with evident displeasure. A stone dropped over the cliffs in the mighty chasm of Wady Hamam, 'Valley of

Doves,' raised a hurricane of pigeon flutterings, 'doves with their silver wings' glancing sweetly in the sun, while far above in the serene sky circled the eagle and the vulture. Skirting the battle-field of Hattin, in view of the savage precipices over which so many gallant men plunged to death, they reached the open country. The field slopes up eastward to the Horns of Hattin, the traditional Mount of Beatitudes, composed of two volcanic knobs overlooking the Sea of Galilee. Passing el-Lubiyeh, the birthplace of Josephus, on the left, Kefr Kenna (Cana of Galilee?), with its water pots and perennial spring, and el-Meshhed (Gath-hepher?) on a rocky hill to the right, they climbed to the northern rim of the cuplike hollow among the hills in which the town of Nazareth is sheltered.

The plain of Esdraelon, or valley of Megiddo, the great battle-field of the ancient world, is cut off from the Jordan Valley by a line of hills—Tabor, the sacred mountain, in the north; Little Hermon, with Endor on its skirt and Nain on its shoulder; and Gilboa, with its sombre memories, in the south. It rolls away westward between the Galilean and Samaritan uplands to the base of Mount Carmel. Despite the wealth of its soil, it was then largely morass and wilderness, subject, as in Gideon's day, to incursions of Bedouin from the east. The prosperous Jewish colonies which are now causing the desert to blossom were still a thing of the future. Jenin, 'En-Gannim,' on the south edge of the plain, with abundant springs and industrious peasantry, was a very paradise of greenery and fruitfulness. A toilsome ride through the mountains, rich in olive groves and vineyards, with much ploughland in the valleys, brought them past the ruin-crowned hill of Samaria to the city of Nablus, which represents old Shechem, in the throat of the pass between Mounts

Gerizim and Ebal. The north-west declivity of Gerizim is a marvel of terracing. From below it presents an aspect of rough stone walls; from above it appears as a luxuriant garden. The south slope of Ebal, so saith tradition, was covered with thick vineyards. At the Arab conquest these were uprooted, lest 'the fruit of the vine' should be too great a temptation to 'the faithful.' Those fierce abstainers had no qualms about Prohibition. Swiftly the formidable prickly pear entered on possession, and now clothes all the face of the mountain. Here, in their ancestral home, Dr. Thomson first made acquaintance with the Samaritans, visited their synagogue, and viewed their sacred rolls. This strengthened his interest in the people, their history and religion, stimulating study and research which later issued in work of high value for the student of the religion of Israel.

The party rode eastwards through the pass, seeing Jacob's Well and Joseph's Tomb in the opening, and Ain Askar, identified by some with Sychar, at the base of Ebal. The road bent southward along the edge of the plain of el-Mukhneh, and led over a barren height whence, looking back, they saw Great Hermon far away to the north, clad in snow garments, dream-like in the distance. Lebonah still lives as Khan el-Lubban, and St. Giles as Sinjil; while somewhat to the east, in the head of a little valley, lie the ruins of Shiloh. Passing the 'Spring of the Robbers,' they threaded the narrow, winding vale to the south, issuing upon the Bethel uplands, where they were overtaken by a rain-storm of exceeding violence. In the consequent discomfort el-Bireh, where it is said that Joseph and Mary first missed the boy Jesus, was hardly seen, and the party were fain to take refuge with friends in Ramallah, a village standing on a commanding position

some ten miles north of Jerusalem. Next day found them in the Holy City.

We need not follow Dr. Thomson as he moves from place to place, making the familiar round of visits in Jerusalem and its environment; nor attempt to describe the impression made upon one whose mind was so richly stored, and whose spirit was so reverent, as he witnessed the scenes associated with the tremendous drama of our redemption. For him the sublime Person, the supreme Actor in that drama, was no mere form of memory, seen beautiful in the amber light of the centuries He has blessed, but a real, living Comrade, fulfilling His ancient promise (Matt. xxviii. 20), whose presence thrilled him alike on Olivet and Zion, in Bethlehem and Bethany, and in all the mountain paths.

A visit to Hebron, the city of the aged Abraham and of the youthful David, clinging to the sides of a cleft in the Judean hills, was memorable chiefly for the friendship then formed. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that Dr. Alexander Paterson then reigned in Hebron. By the magic of a virile personality, perfect fearlessness and strict integrity, dispensing his skilful help with impartial kindness, the worst criminal being as sure of succour as the law-abiding, he had in a few years established an influence with the people not easily to be measured. They trusted him utterly, and opened heart and mind to him without reserve. There was little he did not know of their family history, their fears and ambitions, strifes and intrigues. Thief, robber, and bandit were no exception. The dark and tortuous ways of the criminal fraternity held no secrets from him. He gave of his best at the appeal of suffering, at any hour of day or night, whether in the city or in the mountain, and he

was repaid with a respectful affection as beautiful as it is rare.

Thomson saw the doctor at his work in the dispensary and hospital; he walked with him through the streets and bazaars, meeting everywhere with friendly welcome. The Moslem fanaticism for which Hebron had been noted from of old was obviously giving way. A few years before, the appearance of an unprotected European in the streets would have been the signal for a fusillade of stones against the infidel. Now, to be known as Paterson's friend was as good as a safe-conduct from the Caliph.

It was pleasant in such company to see the vale and perennial spring of Eshcol; the mighty sanctuary covering the patriarchal dust that sleeps in the cave of Machpelah, with the hole in the wall where letters may still be posted to Father Abraham; the pools and other relics of antiquity: and also to visit the glass-blowers, the potters, the makers of skin bottles, and the workers in wool, who supply with their commodities a wide circle of the wilderness.

From that time Thomson watched the development of the work in Hebron with ever-deepening interest. It was a great joy to him when in 1900 the United Free Church of Scotland took over the Mission, with Dr. Paterson as missionary in charge, and became responsible for its maintenance. This step was taken in obedience to what was recognized as Divine leading. It was welcomed as likely to enlist the sympathies of former United Presbyterians, it being the first new bit of Jewish missionary work undertaken by the United Church. The faith of the General Assembly was fully justified. The new venture found liberal supporters. The Mission grew and prospered. Property was purchased, and the building of a commodious

hospital was well under way when the outbreak of war brought everything to a standstill.

After the War, while reorganization was in process, the Jewish Committee of the Church responsible for the maintenance of the work decided to sever the connection of the United Free Church with Hebron. They proposed to hand over the enterprise to another Society, or, if this could not be done, to close it down. In the event property and funds to the value of from £12,000 to £13,000 were given away, and such conditions created that Dr. Paterson was compelled to retire from the field. This action of the Committee cast a shadow on the closing years of Dr. Thomson's life. His knowledge was not that of a casual visitor. He realized how great an opportunity for unique service was thus lost to the Church. He understood, as strangers, however inquiring, may not hope to do, how the problems of Jewish missionary work are qualified and conditioned by its Moslem environment. He also knew that our Protestant Presbyterianism furnishes by far the most hopeful avenue of approach to the mind of Jew and Moslem. From his interest in the Palestine of to-morrow it grieved him to the heart to think that a position won through thirty years of strenuous toil, of such present influence and of such future promise, should be thus deliberately discarded.

Thomson held that the money contributed for Hebron was in the nature of a trust which the Church had accepted, which therefore the Church was not free to throw away, especially as the ends for which it was given were being so well fulfilled. But generous donors whose money formed the funds and paid for the property were not consulted: their wishes were known—and ignored. A Society of the same Church

as that to which the Hebron funds and property were given away had property in Safad to dispose of. The Jewish Committee wished to secure it. But the Society had regard to the sentiments of their donors, and the Committee had to pay £15,000. Adding the £12,000 given away at Hebron, the actual cost to the Church of this new property was over £27,000. Thomson's interest in Jewish Missions remained, but his confidence in the Committee was shattered beyond repair.

A brief visit was made to Beyrout, Baalbek, and Damascus. Beyrout is protected from the south by Ras Beyrout, the promontory on which stands the complex of splendid buildings belonging to the American Protestant University and Hospital. The city lies on the bay, the land rising behind through slopes of luxuriant green to the snowy peaks of Lebanon. Beyrout is a great meeting-place of East and West. It is largely the creation of European enterprise in which our own countrymen have played no mean part. Such names as Black and Somerville, pioneers of industry, will long be held in honour. Standing on the great shore road from north to south, connected with the interior by road and rail, while her port is visited by ships of many nations, the position of the city is one of great advantage.

Thomson was naturally interested in the work done by the various Missions here—The American Protestant Mission, The Church of Scotland Mission, and the British Syrian Schools. He was specially attracted by the brave effort made by an intrepid Scotswoman, Miss Taylor, on behalf of Moslem and Druze girls. Her great practical sagacity and courage in dealing with the Turkish authorities won for her the reputation of being possessed by a *jinni*, or 'demon.' Such persons have always been held in great reverence in

the East. Certain it is that there were few things which she really wished which she did not obtain. She was spied upon, of course, as were all the missionaries; but as the spies knew no English, the language in which the services were conducted, they never gave serious trouble. In relation to other Missions a little knowledge sometimes proved a source of annoyance. To sing 'Hold the Fort, for I am coming' was denounced as sedition; while 'Soldiers of Christ! arise,' was taken as plain incitement to rebellion!

A drive of some nine miles northward through gardens, orchards, and mulberry groves carried the visitors to the mouth of the Dog River. There, on panels cut in the face of the rock, great world conquerors, from Sennacherib to Allenby, have left records of their presence. The last, however, was yet to come. With a thrill of pleasure the scholar there read the name of Sennacherib. The Egyptian panels were less distinct.

The glorious ruins that crown the acropolis at Baalbek have no peer save those on the Athenian acropolis. Built upon vast substructions of unknown antiquity, they date from the early centuries of our era, and may be regarded as the last outburst of pagan splendour before the triumph of Christianity. The tooth of time, earthquake, and vandal have dealt mercilessly with the regal beauty of these famous shrines, once the wonder of the world. But enough still remains of massive walls and portals, stately columns, sculptured beauty of capital and architrave, and delicate tracery of carved work, to fill the beholder with admiration. The six graceful pillars, all that are left of the lofty peristyle in the south-west, 'are still the crowning glory of the place.' Like Robinson, Thomson was struck with 'the singular symmetry of proportion which gives an air of lightness and beauty



JERUSALEM FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES
(p. 172)

to the most massive materials.' Three gigantic stones built into the western wall of the substructions, and the cyclopean block known as 'the stone of the Pregnant Woman,' 70 feet long by 14 feet by 13 feet, in the adjoining quarry, testify to the prowess and skill of workmen long forgotten. Arabian geographers record the belief that the greater temple with its immense stones was the work of the times of Solomon; while the Jew, Benjamin of Tudela, tells us that this is the city mentioned in Scripture as Baalath in the valley of Lebanon, which Solomon built for the daughter of Pharaoh. 'The palace,' he says, 'is constructed of stones of enormous size, measuring twenty spans in length and twelve in breadth; no binding material holds these stones together, and people pretend that the building could have been erected only with the help of Ashmedai' (i. 86).

The Greeks called the place Heliopolis, identifying Baal with the sun. Baalbek may be the survival of the older name. Standing out on their raised platform, the temples fronted the east, to greet the rising sun; they commanded a far view north and south in the green vale of Coele-Syria; while the white-tipped rampart of Great Lebanon cut them off from the sea. Here Thomson revelled in memories of remote antiquity stirred by the ruins and their spacious surroundings; and in the beauties of architecture and ornament his artistic soul found keen delight.

In the large village hard by the ruins Thomson had his first and only contact with the Metawileh. To this heretical Moslem sect most of the villagers belong. They are very fanatical. A glass from which a stranger has drunk is at once broken to pieces lest any of the faithful be polluted by putting it to his lips, so zealous are they for religious purity. But,

truth to tell, that is the only purity they affect. One who has seen the condition in which they live will have no great desire to eat or drink from their utensils.

Damascus was approached by the thickly wooded glen of Wady Barada, which breaks through the mountain range, cutting off the northern reaches of Anti-Lebanon from Mount Hermon in the south. The Barada, the ancient Abana, carries life and fertility over el-Ghauta, the rich plain of Damascus, stealing it, indeed, from the desert and making it a garden. But for the Barada there could be no Damascus. A myriad conduits carry the water to every part of the city. Were it to fail, Damascus would perish of thirst. The dwindling stream flows eastward, and dies in the desert marshes.

This great and splendid city claims an antiquity reaching back at least to the days of Abraham (Gen. xv. 2), and no mean part she has played in the tremendous movements that have stirred these lands from the dawn of history until yesterday. She stands like a seaport on the edge of the ocean of sand. Hence from of old argosies set out upon their adventurous enterprises, returning hither with the merchandise of the south and of the farther Orient: gold and frankincense of Arabia, and precious things from India and China. For this reason Damascus, though often overwhelmed, was never destroyed. Phoenix-like she has ever risen from her ashes to a fresh life of beauty and prosperity. Overlooked from the north by Jebel Kasyun, and girt around by the greenery of her orchards—where will you find apricots like the golden apples of Damascus?—she has always presented the aspect of an earthly paradise to the dwellers in the sandy wastes.

Charmed with her fair surroundings, intrigued by

remains of the remote past that still attract the scholar and the archæologist, Thomson entered the city. The covered bazaars were of exhaustless interest, thronged at every hour of day by crowds in picturesque, many-coloured costumes, all eager upon bargains. Gay saddles, straps, and belts of leather, picked out with silver thread; Persian rugs and carpets; antiques of varied attractions, coins, gems, and weapons; pistols and daggers inlaid as to the handles with mother-of-pearl; copper and brass work garnished with silver; artistic woodwork; gold and silver jewellery and ornaments; knitted and woven fabrics of silk, linen, cotton, and wool—these, taken at random, illustrate the goods for sale. The merchants are usually men of dignified composure; but the street vendors of vegetables, fruit, and flowers, the water-sellers with clinking drinking-cups, and the beggars, make no little din and confusion.

The massive bulk of the citadel, resting on substructions of great antiquity, rising from the midst of the Coppersmiths' Bazaar, and the spacious Mosque of the Omiyades, are the most impressive residue of old-time splendours. Outside the main entrance of the mosque on the west are the beautiful remains of a Roman triumphal arch through which one passed on approaching the temple, which then stood where the mosque stands to-day. It probably occupied part of the site of the far older Temple of Rimmon. Here is exemplified the religious conservatism of the East. Consecrated in the days of Syrian might, or perhaps even earlier, through all succeeding changes it has been maintained for religious uses. The Church of St. John the Baptist succeeded the Roman temple. 'By the head of Yahya'—*i.e.* John the Baptist—is an oath still heard on the lips of the Damascene.

Finally the caliph Welid (705-715) replaced the church by a mosque of exceeding beauty and splendour, many Syrian ruins contributing to its adornment. Arabian writers become lyrical in extolling its wealth and glory. Their descriptions are no doubt exaggerated, but with its rare marbles, mosaics, precious stones, golden vines trailing over arch and pillar, and six hundred lamps of the same metal, it may well have roused their enthusiasm. A fire in 1069, and the havoc wrought by the brutal Tamerlane, permanently dimmed its glory ; but after the fire of 1893 courts, domes, and minarets were restored on something like their original scale. Outside the precinct on the north-west stands the tomb of the chivalrous Saladin. Christian associations are preserved in the so-called tomb of the Baptist, and in the minaret of Jesus. But what appealed to Thomson most of all was an inscription cut in the upper beam of a built-up doorway in the south wall. Climbing to the top of the neighbouring bazaar he was able to read, plainly carved in Greek, ' Thy kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations ' (Ps. cxlv. 13. ' O Christ ' is an interpolation). This, overlooked when the building was transformed into a mosque, the Moslems have allowed to stand.

The reputed house of Naaman, the street called Straight, with what was visible of the fine old eastern gateway, the house of Ananias, and the spot where Paul was let down over the wall in a basket, were all visited. There was much friendly intercourse with the members of the Irish Presbyterian Mission, of which the Rev. Mr. Phillips was then in charge. But one building in the city attracted chief attention. It was the home and centre of work carried on by

Dr. F. I. Mackinnon, who here represented the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society. Early in 1883 Dr. Mackinnon began his service in Damascus. His professional qualifications were of the highest order. His linguistic gifts enabled him to make light of difficulties that beset the missionary in the East. His perfect command of French put him at ease in official circles. He was familiar with Spanish and Italian. Very soon he was both fluent and accurate in Arabic. This greatly commended him to the Arabs, who are proud of their beautiful language, and grieve to hear it mangled. To acquire correct pronunciation is for most Europeans a laborious business, and few attain perfect success. But it was the man himself, strong alike in intellect and physique, resourceful, skilful, and sympathetic, with a certain radiant humour which lit up many a grim situation, who led captive the hearts of the Damascenes. All classes learned to trust him in their hour of need. Once and again, when dread epidemics struck the city and other medical men incontinently fled, Mackinnon made the woes of the people his own. Through all the dark days of one terrible cholera outbreak he stood by them single-handed, fighting the fell disease with almost super-human energy, and rescuing many from the very jaws of death. His splendid self-devotion was never forgotten. Gratitude and affection gave him a unique influence in the life of the city.

Those were the great days of what was called the Scottish Triumvirate: Mackinnon in Damascus; Torrance, whose story is charmingly told by Mr. Livingstone in *A Galilee Doctor*, in Tiberias; and Paterson in Hebron. Each possessed a strongly marked individuality. With striking differences in physical and mental build, and in their methods, they

were entirely one in the great object of their lives. Their courage and chivalry appealed to the best elements in the Oriental nature. Disinterested and costly service freely rendered broke down prejudice and bigotry. Myths began to form about them in the popular mind. Astonishing stories were told of their prowess with the scalpel, in village groups and round the camp fires in the wilderness. They impressed the imagination, a thing essential to dominion of any sort in the East. But their fair and honourable manhood, their friendly bearing, their keen sympathy and ready helpfulness in sickness and suffering, touched the heart of a people proud, aloof, even disdainful of foreigners, yet sensitive and responsive to real human kindness. In the confidence and affection thus awakened, opening deep springs of loyalty, lay the secret of the power which these men exercised.

Mackinnon was then busy with his great building scheme in which so many hopes were centred. He had secured a fine plot of land on the north side of the city, outside the Gate of St. Thomas. There a beautiful hospital was erected, and opened on April 2, 1898; Queen Victoria graciously permitting it to be called by her name. The hospital compound, with garden, grounds, and dwelling-house, was one of the most attractive spots in the environs of the city. Here the good work went forward, and it is simple truth to say that there was no influence comparable with Mackinnon's in the city, in the surrounding plain and mountain; while among the far-spreading encampments of the remote desert his name was literally 'a household word.'

This success was achieved in a city noted for the fanaticism of its Moslem inhabitants. One incident may suggest the atmosphere. Some members of the

Irish Mission and of the London Jews' Society went for a picnic to a pleasant spot in the outskirts of the city. It was proposed to sing a hymn; but the experienced missionary would not risk the singing, lest it should provoke an attack by the Moslems.

After a spell of work through the hot days of summer, a short trip was arranged to the top of Mount Hermon in the beginning of September. By this time the snow had well-nigh disappeared. The toilsome ascent was made from Hasbeiyeh, for the most part on marvellously sure-footed little horses. The summit of the mountain breaks into three heads a few hundred feet apart. The south-western peak is surrounded by traces of a hewn stone wall. In the apex is a hole about nine feet in diameter and over six feet deep. Outside the wall to the south are the remains of a rectangular building with entrance from the east. On the north-east is a cavern hewn in the rock, also with entrance from the east. Probably these are memorials of a worship which was already old when the Canaanites were driven from Palestine. Then, from this remote 'high place,' visible from afar, when the snow on the crest gleamed to the first ray of the rising sun, the cloud of smoke curled upward from the sacrifice offered to the great lord of day. For those who believe that here, or on one of the lower spurs of the mountain, Christ was transfigured, the place assumes a higher sanctity. As we have seen, Thomson did not credit the tradition which associates Hermon with the Transfiguration. But few men can have been more deeply impressed with the splendour of the view it commands. Northward runs the green vale of Coele-Syria, guarded by the twin ranges of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, with the majestic ruins of Baalbek. To the east lies Damascus, nestling amid

her gardens and orchards, picturesque and beautiful. The eye ranges over bleak hill country, breadths of black basalt, the wide, fruitful hollow of Hauran, the wooded slopes of Jebel ed-Druze—the Mountain of Bashan—and away over the rolling billows of the Arabian sea of sand. Southward are the marshes and the Waters of Merom, the thread of Jordan running swiftly to the Sea of Galilee ; farther away the Ghor—the Jordan Valley—between Mount Gilead on the east and the Samarian hills on the west, sinks towards the Dead Sea until lost in haze. From the far south Mount Nebo greets Sirion (Hermon), the glittering ‘breast-plate’ in the north. West of the Ghor the ground rises steeply to the ridge of western Palestine ; thence in dwindling slopes descends to the maritime plain and the shore, where the blue Mediterranean waves break white on the yellow sand. Is any bit of earth haunted by greater historic memories, reaching from the days of Chedorlaomer to those of Napoleon and Ibrahim Pasha ? You may trace the routes followed by armies in bygone days across the landscape, through the defiles and over the plains, and identify the spots where mighty captains in furious battle struggled for victory. Nazareth and Gennesaret, and the heights that look down on Jacob’s Well, call to mind the greatest Figure of all. With what contrasted associations do the village of Nain on Little Hermon and the rough crest of Carmel, Elijah’s Place of Sacrifice, salute each other across the wide levels of Esdraelon.

The party heard of the brown bears that still live in the mountain, working no little havoc at times in vineyard and garden. The wolf and the leopard also haunt the savage solitudes, but none was seen. The descent was made without accident, and Safad reached in due season.

CHAPTER XIII

By Capernaum to Aphek—Doctoring the Villagers—Gadara—Beautiful Jerash—Rabbath Ammon—Madeba : Mosaics—View from Pisgah—Warrior's Tale—By Heshbon and Elealeh to es-Salt—Ramoth Gilead?—Cross Jabbok and Rajib to Kefrinji—Splendid Sheikh and Ragged Son—Sabbath at Pella—Fording Jordan—Grief for an Only Son—Memorable Snow-storm.

IN 1897 the intercalary month, Veadar, fell to be inserted, and by consequence October was almost entirely occupied with Jewish feasts and fasts. New Year fell on September 27th, and the Fast of Expiation, the Great Day of Atonement, on October 6th. The work of the Mission was therefore at a standstill. The opportunity was seized to make a brief journey east of Jordan, through the region of the Decapolis: a land of endless fascinations, with its wonderfully preserved and beautiful ruins of once splendid cities; with richly varied scenery—thickly wooded hills, fertile fields and vineyards, and great gorges from the depths of which is heard the gurgle of running water all the year round. Here we can do little more than indicate the route taken and record some of Thomson's impressions by the way.

A Moslem muleteer, Ali Bustani, provided the animals—a horse for Dr. Thomson and a pacing mule for Mrs. Thomson. A tent was packed upon one mule, boxes and furniture on another, while the inevitable donkey was there for odd jobs. The guide

and interpreter was Najib Nassar—now Najib Effendi, founder and editor of *el-Karmel*, one of the most influential Arabic newspapers in the East. He rode his own mare, a beautiful Arab. The muleteers and animals spent the night in the Mission courtyard, to make sure of an early start. Arabs have no sense of time. By 4 A.M. on October 7th the cavalcade was moving in the darkness through the narrow streets of Safad. Out on the mountain they watched the pageantry of dawn. 'First the day-star is observed; then a bright rosy arch advances athwart the sky, driving the night before it. Within this roseate arch glows a sea of molten gold, with certain fiery islands near the horizon. The glow intensifies in the eastern sky until suddenly a gleam of light shoots up from a cleft in the hills. It is the first ray of the rising sun.'

The company of six—there were three muleteers—presented a formidable appearance. The muleteers carried two long native guns and a pair of flint-lock pistols. Najib, with gun slung on his shoulder, curved sabre by his side, revolver and cartridge belt, was a warlike figure. Even the good Doctor was girt with a revolver. The native weapons were perhaps most dangerous to the man who used them. Happily there was no occasion to try their quality, but in the land to be traversed the possession of arms was a sort of insurance against attack.

Descending the mountain, they struck the Damascus road near Khan Jubb Yosef, a ruined inn on the uplands, with cistern, identified by errant Moslem tradition with the pit of Dothan. A bridle-path to the left led them down through wild, rocky scenery, past the grey hill on which lie the pathetic remains of Chorazin, on to the shore of the sacred lake, now shining in the morning sun. The view from the heights

was very beautiful, even at this, the driest season : Great Hermon in the north still streaked with snow ; the gleam of water among the rushes of el-Huleh marshes ; the irregular line of green that marked the course of Jordan ; the precipitous steeps that break down to the sea from the eastern plateau ; the alternate plain and bold bluff on the west ; and the opening of the Ghor, the deepest cleft on earth's surface, in the south. Descending waters have cut deep glens in the soft limestone of the eastern plateau, the mouths of which assume a sharply triangular aspect. This is shared by the intervening declivities. The eastern side of the lake is thus a series of triangles, alternately right and upside down, the latter being the glens, or wadies. The slopes were all greyish brown, a few green shrubs appearing only in the mouth of the glens. At the foot slumbered the wonderful lake on whose waters our Lord walked to His toiling disciples.

They passed the blackened ruins of Tell Hum, close on the water's edge, the identity of which with Capernaum recent investigations seem to have established. They crossed the two branches of the Jordan where the waters enter the sea—not without excitement, as Thomson's horse was inclined to enjoy a bath regardless of its rider's fate. They passed a swarm of hornets, fortunately unnoticed : formidable creatures they are. 'Imagine a creature like a wasp, only twice as long and stout in proportion, brown and yellow instead of black and yellow, and there you have the hornet.' A square stone building sheltered the man who collected the Sultan's 'tenths' from the local peasantry. Nearer the hills, where yet the grass was green, is the traditional scene of the feeding of the four thousand. Lunch was taken on a ruin-covered promontory jutting into the lake—hard-boiled

eggs, sardines, and toothsome, if tough, Arabic bread. The site is called Kurseh. It may represent Gergesa. In the face of the valley ancient tombs are found, and down a steep slope on the south the swine may have plunged to death in the sea.

The wady here opening is called Wady Samak, 'Fish Glen.' It may have formed the highway for fishermen carrying fish to the Hauran markets. The party crossed the valley and climbed to the level plain at Fiq, the ancient Aphek, where Ahab defeated Benhadad.

Every European is a *hakim*, 'doctor,' to the natives. The travellers' tent was soon besieged by sick folk. A supply of simple remedies had been brought. In distributing them Najib's experience as dispenser with Dr. Torrance was invaluable. Serious cases were urged to go to Tiberias. The people listened attentively to a short address on the Prodigal Son. Then grateful patients led the visiting company round the ruins of ancient splendour, dating perhaps from the days of the early Christian emperors.

From the brink of the precipice they looked down on the ruined fortress of Gamala, and across the lake to Tiberias. They passed the mound marking the site of Hippos, another city of the Decapolis. On the left they found a village recently deserted. The inhabitants had reaped and threshed the grain, and then moved to find grass and water for their cattle. Soon Umm Qeis, 'Gadara,' appeared almost at hand. Alas for appearances! Between them and it yawned the gulf of Wady Yarmuk—'Hieromax'—'a chasm in which Arthur's Seat might have been placed and its top would not have reached the level.' The descent through matted brushwood was steep and difficult. Najib's mare, attacked by hornets, was almost un-

manageable. A swelling as large as a crown piece appeared on her flank, caused by a sting. Strong sulphur springs of very high temperature rise in the bed of the valley. The ruins here suggest that the Romans made ample use of these. Luncheon was enjoyed under the shade of acacias and oleander. A well-marked road led up to the village of Umm Qeis.

The ruins of ancient Gadara are deeply impressive. Numerous marble sarcophagi, once beautiful, scattered about, testify to the wealth and rank of the old inhabitants. The tent was pitched directly above a splendid theatre, very perfect, tier upon tier of marble seats still showing the impress of human backs. There are great masses of overturned masonry, with occasional columns still partly standing. The limestone blocks paving the streets are worn into ruts by the chariot wheels. The position commands a glorious view in all directions. The city may have been founded by the Lagid kings of Egypt. It had a stormy history, and the ruins are probably those of the city as rebuilt under the Antonines.

The sick here were treated as at Fiq. The muleteers had had their own supper, but hearing that the sheikh was giving a feast, they turned up and ate as if they had not seen food for a week. So reported Najib, who had gone to pay respects to the chief in name of the travellers.

Through a dry country with many ruin-capped hills the party rode to Irbid, a town sufficiently large to have a Governor, or Qaimmaqam. In the central square, an irregular, sloping space surrounded by flat-roofed houses with latticed windows high up in the walls, and cumbered with rubbish heaps, the company halted while Najib bought quinine and Ali bought grapes. Thomson had a narrow escape from being

called to prescribe for the Governor's wife! After luncheon they set out for el-Hosn, noting many fragments of cistern heads that must have been old in Roman days. A man to all appearance pure negro was encountered who, like that experienced traveller Ulysses, had his lies to hand. He proved to be a member of the Bedouin tribe, Beni Sakhr, whose reputation for honesty is not high. His kindly interest in the visitors' route was not encouraged, and two of his kinsmen turning up, he went off with them. He may have been bought as a child in Egypt, and growing up in the tribe was reckoned Bedouin.

A Crusading castle, now sadly crumbled, stood on a slight elevation, and over against it on the lower slope stands the town of el-Hosn. The tent was pitched in the castle precinct, and women brought water at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per 'bottle,' the natives crowding round as usual. 'These women, with black skins, faces tattooed in blue, hair in wild straggling locks, bearing water in black goat-skins with the hair still on them, were not an appetizing spectacle. The water was black, and had to be boiled before using. The cistern from which it was brought had probably not been cleaned since Roman days.'

The people here brought antiquities for sale, chiefly coins of different periods, copper, silver, and even gold. There were seals as old as the Sargonid princes of Nineveh, and many Gnostic gems. The Gnostics were heretics of the second century with strange esoteric doctrines, which they indicated by signs graven on their seals.

'Sometimes one can secure a dog as watch for the period of stay. A dog comes fawning up to you, slightly wagging his tail, bowing his head, and turning up his eyes in an entreating way, saying as plainly as can be,

"If you want a dog to watch your tent I'll do it cheap." A scrap of meat, a kindly word, and the bargain is struck. So long as you remain no other dog may intrude. When you depart he wags good-bye with his tail, and remains behind.'

The way from el-Hosn led through an oak forest where, at the foot of a face of rock, they visited 'Jephthah's Cave,' a reputed haunt of robbers. The village of Suf, which may be the Old Testament Mizpah, was reached about 2 P.M. 'The houses with their flat roofs looked like huge boxes built up against the face of the hill.' Delightful grapes were purchased here, and the party lunched in an olive grove hard by a little stream. Here Thomson pictures the maids of Mizpah coming forth with timbrel and dance to meet the returning Jephthah, fresh from his victory over the Ammonites.

The ruins of Jerash in their splendour, stateliness, and beauty surpassed Thomson's expectations. The magnificent street of columns, the mighty pillared temple of the sun, the theatre, the naumachia, and the triumphal arch spoke eloquently of the city's ancient glory. A colony of Circassians planted here had already done no little damage to sculptured and inscribed stones. Thomson copied some of the more recently exposed inscriptions, but came away with the impression that in this place a great harvest awaits the patient and skilful excavator—if he arrives before the Circassians have completed the destruction.

There was a Jewish community in Jerash in the time of Christ. It is almost certain that He must have walked its streets. Its greatest renown belongs to the time of the Antonines, the ruins being coeval with those of Amman, Gadara, Baalbek, etc.

Very little is known of the history of Jerash. It

owed its prosperity to the great caravan road from Egypt that passed this way to Damascus and the fords of the Euphrates. The time came when, owing to the internecine wars of the Moslem caliphs, the road was closed, and Jerash and her sister cities fell into decay. There was no spirit left to repair the havoc wrought by time and earthquake.

Thomson reflects, 'If these secondary, relatively unimportant cities were so splendid, what must Antioch, Ephesus, and Alexandria have been? Above all, what must Rome have been in the days of the Antonines? The utmost magnificence achieved by London, Berlin, Paris, or Vienna is paltry compared with that attained by these petty provincial towns.'

The party rode down the valley southward, leaving what may have been the site of Mahanaim, with its memories of Jacob and David, on a hill to the right. Did the aged king watch from that height for news of his wayward boy Absalom? They went down into the deep trough where runs 'the Blue River,' the Jabbok. In the green holm there, almost encircled by the stream, Jacob may have spent his dark hours of wrestling. Not far away Peniel lifted its head in the sunrise. Away south of the Jabbok on the upland stretched forest land. The sudden apparition of oxen with the plough slung up between them frightened the animals. Mrs. Thomson's steed malevolently rushed under a terebinth which pushed her from the saddle. It was a similar incident, probably within the boundaries of the same forest, that cost the unfortunate Absalom his life. Happily, the lady, uninjured, resumed her seat.

Wonderfully beautiful was the high land traversed that day: 'wide, unpastured glades interspersed with groves of evergreen oaks.' It was not easy to find



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and follow the track to Amman. Inquiries at passers-by elicited contradictory directions, but the way was found to Yajuz, which may be Jahaz, the scene of Jephthah's victory. It is marked by a Mohammedan tomb, a well, and the ruins of an ancient octagonal temple, with columns prostrate and broken. The party lunched within the precinct of the sanctuary, then hastened in the declining day until they reached the ruin-covered hill on which anciently stood the castle and upper city of Rabbath Ammon. Riding along the steep face of the hill they looked down on the modern town, tracing by the green foliage the track of the stream flowing through it. The line of the fine pillared street could also be followed among the flat-roofed houses. They crossed the brook and encamped in front of a highly ornate ruin identified as the odeum. To the right towered the massive theatre. Here the Circassians had built houses behind the upper wall. The entrances, through which the ancient inhabitants thronged to see the plays, were used as doors. 'To see the people popping out and in away up the hillside reminded one irresistibly of rabbits in a warren.' A ride of thirteen hours made all the travellers ready for a sleep. The evening meal disposed of, and a couple of Arab guides found for the morrow—security taken from them in the shape of two hatchets—the company retired.

Walking round in the morning they viewed the remains of a city not inferior in size and splendour to Jerash. Two temples and a basilica, theatre, odeum, and street of columns, dominated from the north by the mighty citadel, must have presented an inspiring sight. In front of the theatre was a space about a hundred yards square, surrounded by a colonnade like the cloisters of a cathedral. A few of the columns

were still *in situ*. The pillars in front of the odeum, the finest building of all, took the place of a porch. The front was once adorned with bas-reliefs in bronze which, of course, have long since disappeared.

The capital of the Ammonites, where the bedstead—sarcophagus—of Og was shown, played a great part in the wars of David. Thereafter little is known of its history till it was taken and rebuilt by Ptolemy Philadelphus, who called it after himself, Philadelphia. The old name in the form of Amman has outlived the later. Thomson felt all that has been so well expressed by a recent writer, Mr. Graham Wallas: 'When I stood on the Trans-Jordanian plateau among the ruins of Amman, I was amazed at the evidence before me of the force with which the Hellenist culture, in the centuries immediately before and after the Christian era, swept over the Semitic frontier, until it died away amid the sands of Iraq. The young Greek-speaking Jew or Syrian who sat and watched the plays of Euripides and Menander on the white marble seats of the beautiful theatre . . . was the representative of a mental force of which the Roman legions and the roads were merely the instruments.'

Thomson's mare had gone slightly lame and needed attention, so Najib took her himself and mounted Thomson on his own sprightly Arab, 'an exchange,' says the Doctor, 'I could not accept without expostulation. He stuck to it, however, and I was very grateful, for she was a delightful steed to ride. Poor Najib lost her soon after our return home, thieves walking off with her.' While waiting for the guides, the party saw great flocks of sheep and goats coming to drink from the stream, guided by shepherd boys and girls. 'The crowds of black, long-eared goats and fat-tailed sheep suggested thoughts of Leah and

Rachel, and of the daughters of Jethro ; but one did not easily associate beauty with those dusky maidens in ragged skirts and unkempt hair, their cheeks and lips hideously tattooed in blue.'

The crops had all been removed, so the travellers could take a straight course across the country. Thomson noted the ruins of a basilica, now called es-Suq, ' the Market,' and a village called Umm Amad. A search revealed nothing of antiquity. ' If this village was the " mother of Pillars," she must have devoured her progeny.' A fox started in front, ' smaller than our foxes, and slightly lighter in colour.' Madeba was seen rising from the plain much as Stirling Castle rises from the Carse. A muleteer drew water with a bucket from an open cistern by the wayside, and was assailed by the owner. Payment of about a penny appeased the irate proprietor.

The hospitable priest allowed the travellers to pitch their camp in the court of the Greek Hospice, thus dispensing all from the anxieties of watching. His establishment consisted of his housekeeper, a female teacher, and a man-servant. The last-named brought them with all ceremony tumblers of water and a glass bottle of citrate of magnesia !

The great sight in Madeba is the map in mosaic discovered when the foundations of the new church were dug—rather badly damaged by the diggers. At first it was dim ; but an attendant threw water on it, and at once line and colour stood out as vividly as when it was laid down. It represents part of Egypt and Palestine, uniting portrayal with cartography. It includes pictures of palm trees, deer fleeing from huntsmen, Jerusalem with walls and towers, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It dates from the reign of Justinian in the sixth Christian century.

Next morning a three hours' ride carried the party to the top of Mount Nebo, whence they saw the entrancing view that has been so often described—the white form of Hermon in the far north ; beyond the Jordan Valley the steep and rugged declivities with yawning gorges by which the western range of Palestine sinks into the Ghor ; the plains of Jericho ; the Dead Sea, with Jordan pouring in his waters ; on the farther shore Engedi, with beautiful streams and abundant foliage, while the dark cliffs behind reared upward to the mountains and wilderness of Judah. Directly to the south rose the steep rock of M'kaur, the Machaerus where Josephus says the Baptist was imprisoned. Piercing the sky on the western horizon stood the Russian tower on Olivet. Somewhere in the hollow solitudes around and below slumber the ashes of Moses in his 'lonely grave.'

Dr. Thomson notes that Mrs. Alexander in her poem on 'The Burial of Moses' speaks of 'the bald old eagle.' This can only be the vulture that circles still over 'grey Beth-Peor's height.' It is bald, which the eagle is not. Also there is now no 'lion stalking' to 'shun that hallowed spot,' that lordly hunter having disappeared from this region many centuries ago.

The sheikh of the local Bedouins invited the party to coffee. This was courteously declined. He then demanded toll of two napoleons each for passage through his territory. Finally he compromised and settled the bill for a couple of bishliks—about a shilling.

Returning to the town, a visit was made to a wretched hovel full of smoke, tenanted by a squalid family. The occupants moved to the sides of the floor, drawing off their straw mats, and exposed a beautiful mosaic, with spirited delineations of birds and beasts. At

the gateway of the old city were two upright shafts supporting alien capitals with grotesque effect.

It appears that this city, assigned by Joshua to Reuben, but regained by the Moabites, a centre of strife in Maccabean times, was important enough to have a bishop in the days of the Christian emperors. It had lain desolate for long when, about the middle 'eighties' of last century, a company of Christians from Kerak settled here and, building their hovels, wrought sad havoc with the ancient remains.

The following story told to the travellers by an old warrior from Kerak then visiting Madeba is too racy of the soil to be omitted. Some twenty years before, he had guided an Englishman to certain inscriptions, and the gentleman carried away one of the inscribed stones. This came to the ears of the Arabs in whose territory the stone had been discovered, and they vowed vengeance on the guide. They moved against him, a formidable force of sixty horsemen and a hundred foot. He mustered twenty-seven friends for his defence, but they were overwhelmed. The rage of the Arabs was concentrated on the man who had lost for them what they believed was a charm to reveal hidden treasure. On his head were two long cuts which had gone through the skull, into each of which one could lay a finger. The wounds were inflicted by the sheikh of the Arabs. 'These,' said the warrior grimly, 'were the last blows he ever struck. I killed him.' With redoubled rage the Arabs pressed him. One thrust him through with a spear—scars below his shoulder and on his breast showing where it had entered and issued. This brought him down. They shot at him, slit open his cheeks, piled stones over him, and left him. After nightfall he crept out, faint as he was with injuries that would surely have been

fatal to most men, and lay concealed with some friendly souls until partially recovered. Then he made his way to Jebel ed-Druze, and returned only when he heard that Sultan Abd ul-Hamid had established order in this region and brought the Arabs under control. He was, however, a ruined man ; flocks and other property were gone. A hundred napoleons sent him by the Englishman had helped to keep him in life among the Druzes. Now he was grateful for the gift of a shilling to buy tobacco.

Circumstances unfortunately made it impossible to visit M'kaur, Callirrhoe, and M'shitta, the famous ruined palace of Chosroes. One who had come from es-Salt with grapes undertook to guide the party to that city, which some would identify with Ramoth Gilead. Starting before daybreak, the horses exhibited an almost Moslem horror of the pigs which in this country are seen only near a Christian village. As morning rose, the travellers passed the ruins of Heshbon on two hills and in the valley between, and of Elealeh on a height about three miles to the north. The remains date from the time of the Antonines. The massive ruins of Araq el-Emir were seen in the distance on a spur of the hills between two of the deep glens that break down towards the Jordan Valley. The route lay through pleasantly wooded country. Some twenty camel-men were met, with a string of ninety-four camels, broken into groups of four or five, each group led by a donkey. A clump of thorn bushes on a slope afforded shelter for lunch. Notably beautiful was the smooth swell of the surrounding declivities, while away below ran a small stream at which cattle and mules were being watered.

The houses of es-Salt, like those of Suf and Safad, are piled above each other on the face of a steep hill

which is crowned by the crumbling walls of an old castle. The newer buildings reach across the valley and on to the opposing slope. In the hillside below the castle is a grotto in which a spring rises, where a church appears to have been at one time cut out of the rock. Camp was pitched in a glen at the foot of the hill among olives and vineyards. Es-Salt is famous for its grapes, of which the finest raisins are made. A gift of these raisins from Mrs. Wilson, wife of the C.M.S. missionary here, was greatly relished. Visitors were entertained to tea and cigarettes, and one of them was engaged as guide for the morrow.

The next halting-place was Kefrinji, for which an early start was made. The path led up the glen, winding among beautiful green vineyards, the vines trailing on the ground and the leaves glistening in the sun. The guide struck for an advance of pay and was dropped. Peasants journeying to Ajlun gave directions. The party traversed the flank of Jebel Osha, a mountain 3595 feet high, which dominates the Gilead plateau, and is by some identified with the true Nebo. Reaching again the brink of the Zerqa or Jabbok Valley, they descended, forded the stream, and climbed the northern steeps by paths at once difficult and dangerous. They were met on the upland plain by a gorgeous sheikh on horseback attended by two ragged men on foot, one of whom was his younger son. The first-born would be as resplendent as the father. The sheikh was going on the Rajib. He had sore eyes, and the prospect of a little doctoring made him guide to Kefrinji. The crossing of the deep gorge of the Rajib was accomplished, not without peril, with the stout assistance of the sheikh's son. Through wooded glens and over rolling hills they passed, reaching Kefrinji at nightfall. They encamped in an

olive grove outside the town. The poor man's eyes were treated with a little solution of boracic acid, and his gratitude was touching.

In the morning they saw how beautiful for situation Kefrinji is, sloping up the side of an olive-clad hill. Away to the north stretched a richly diversified country, the Crusading fortress, Qal'at er-Rabad, two hours distant, rising over the woodlands in the growing light as it has done for eight hundred years. Leaving er-Rabad on the right, they entered a delightful dell overshadowed by pomegranates, oleanders, acacias, and oaks, through which Nahr Ajlun runs down to Jordan.

Wady el-Yabis, 'the dry,' is as deep as the Zerqa. In its bed only a few pools marked the course of the winter stream. It preserves the name of Jabesh Gilead, but the old city itself has passed from human ken. Descending into the valley, the travellers saw a fine cromlech, three large flat stones standing upright, and a fourth, also flat, laid table-wise on the top. In the bottom the party off-saddled, and the horses, seeking coolness, joyfully wallowed in the pools.

After lunch the party proceeded northward to Wady Saleh, down which by a narrow path along the edge of the gorge they reached the Jordan Valley, and saw to the right, on a spur of the hills, the site of Pella. Hither the disciples came, obeying Christ's injunction, when Jerusalem was surrounded by armies. The place lay desolate for centuries. Only recently a tribe of Egyptian Arabs had settled among the ruins. The tent was pitched by the threshing-floor, above a little stream. It was late, and the people were churlish, refusing food to the muleteers, who had omitted to get supplies at Kefrinji. The travellers gave them all they could spare, but even then one of them exclaimed

on going to sleep that he had room—internally—for a camel !

The Sabbath was spent here, and a service conducted amid the ruins of the Christian city of refuge. Drums of columns, bases, and capitals were strewn around ; there were traces of temples and churches, and one stone which might be the lid of a sarcophagus or a lintel, on which were carved three circles, the name Thomas in Greek, and a monogram. In the afternoon the sheikh apologized for the surly conduct of his people the night before, and invited the company to a feast. Only a cup of coffee was accepted, with the declaration that a cup of coffee from a friend was itself a feast. The sheikh indicated that his people were disposed to move from Pella as a fever-stricken place.

At four o'clock the next morning the party set out to cross the Jordan, guided by a man from near Beisan. Skirting for some distance a tall hedge of acacias through which they heard the rush of the river, the guide made a sudden dive through the bushes. ‘ Into the river he went,’ says Dr. Thomson, ‘ the water taking him to the waist. Najib followed, and I after him. The guide went sharply up the river, then curved downwards. I know not if any of my readers have ever been on horseback in the midst of a swiftly running stream that was taking the horse up to the saddle girth, and this in the dark grey of more than an hour before sunrise. You dimly see the waters, you hear them rushing round you, your head swims, and you seem to be carried away, when the horse begins to rise out of the water and you are on the other side. We all know what “ crossing the Jordan ” symbolizes. The chilliness, the mystery, the darkness, made the symbol strikingly adequate.’

We need not follow the travellers in detail over the more familiar ways in Galilee. From Beisan (Bethshan) they rode along the eastern side of Little Hermon, in sight of Endor and Nain, to the top of Mount Tabor, where they encamped in the compound of the Greek monastery. They examined the ruins of ancient structures on the mountain, but were enraptured with the wonderful view, including the main features of Galilee, Samaria, and Peræa, Great Hermon, the Sea of Tiberias, and a glint of the great sea past the shoulder of Mount Carmel.

The journey to Safad proved long and fatiguing. Najib suffered from fever contracted at Pella, fell out at Hattin, and went home to Tiberias, having first made a complete reckoning with Ali Bustani. The more troublesome and dangerous parts of the mountain track being passed, 'Ali pushed on ahead,' says Dr. Thomson. 'He had left his little son, his only son, sick, and was eager to hear how it was with the lad. When, a little after sunset, we reached the town we found that the boy had been dead for a week. Poor Ali was overwhelmed with grief. We saw what it meant in the East to be in bitterness for an only son. This sorrow, however, did not prevent Ali from attempting to cheat us the following day. He could neither read nor write, but his errors in reckoning were always in his own favour. He asserted that we owed him a napoleon more than had been calculated at Hattin. We did not give it him as part of his hire : he was content to receive it as baksheesh.'

The Jewish feasts were just concluding, so work was speedily resumed, all the ordinary activities being happily pursued through the winter months. Thomson speaks with warm appreciation of the comfort and cheer enjoyed at Communion seasons when Mr. Soutar

assisted him in Safad, and he Mr. Soutar in Tiberias. This fellowship was a source of joy and strength during all the Safad years. The winter was marked by a memorable snowstorm in February (1898). Heavy rain fell on a Thursday, then sleet, and on the Monday blinding showers of snow. For several days the Safad uplands were white. The oldest inhabitants could remember nothing like it. The train from Damascus to Beyrout was snowed up, and in different parts of the country fifteen muleteers perished in the snowdrifts.

CHAPTER XIV

Cyprus—Influence of British—Larnaka—Limassol—John Bull's (financially) Saving Grace—Cœur de Lion—Over the Mountains to Nikosia—The English—Kyrenia—St. Hilarion—Forgotten Hero—Bellapais—The Priest—Nikosia to Famagusta—Dilapidation—Ruined Churches—Frescoes—Salamis—Larnaka—Covenanting Church of America—New Governor's Arrival—By Ship to Haifa.

MRS. THOMSON's health had been causing some anxiety, and it was thought that she might have to go home for a spell. Happily things improved with the advancing spring, and during the annual suspension of work in April she and Dr. Thomson sought change and refreshment in a short visit to Cyprus.

Sailing from Haifa by way of Beyrout, they called at Larnaka on April 8th, along with an American who wished to see 'how cousin John managed his little property.' With reasonable pride they saw the clean streets, 'V.R.I.' on all public property, and the Union Jack flying over the post office. Purchases of Cyprian silk fabrics were made for the delight of receiving in exchange intelligible money—the English sovereign and silver money being current there, while the copper coinage is in piastres. They visited the schools, one of fine, lively looking girls, and the other of alert and intelligent boys, who did well in English, and read the New Testament in Greek—their own language. They sailed from Larnaka to Limassol in full view of the Troodos range, which terminates eastward in the Olympus of the ancients. There was a

free fight among the boatmen for the privilege of rowing them ashore; knives were drawn and men grappled with each other as with deadliest intent. It was mainly a histrionic performance.

At the Custom House some oranges purchased at Larnaka were confiscated through fear of introducing a disease that affects orange trees. A visit was paid to the venerable Chaplain to the Forces, the Rev. Mr. Ferguson, in his beautiful bungalow amid shady trees, adorned with climbing roses. In an over-dinner talk Dr. and Mrs. Thomson learned that instead of indicating satisfactory hotels, their kind host and hostess had arranged for them to be received all over the island in the houses of their friends. Unfortunately they had no intimates in Paphos, and there was no hotel, so no visit could be made to the city of Elymas the Sorcerer.

On Easter Sunday Dr. Thomson relieved Mr. Ferguson of duty at the camp, and also in the English church, of which Mr. Ferguson took voluntary charge. Mr. Spence, School Inspector, presided over the church at Nikosia, and an American Presbyterian missionary over that in Larnaka. For the rest, prayers were read on Sundays by Judge or Commissioner. Thus, as Thomson observes, 'John Bull's religion was carried on with so much (financially) saving grace as to astonish outsiders. The clergymen named were all paid for doing something else, and ministered to the spiritual needs of the English residents by the way.'

A drive along the shore towards Paphos was rendered memorable by the beauty of the spring flowers, prominent among them being the asphodel, 'whose very name seemed to exhale poetry.' Beyond Colossi they saw the partly ruined castle where Richard Cœur de Lion spent his honeymoon with Berengaria. Here

stayed, while negotiating with Richard, the potentate Isaac Comnenus, whose treachery led to Richard's conquest of the island. The Lusignan kings adorned the castle, and the Lusignan Lion is still prominent everywhere; differing from the British Lion mainly in having a foliated tail.

Colossi was the centre of an agricultural experiment in which the Duke of Sutherland and Sir Patrick Geddes were interested. The obstinate conservatism of the peasants made progress difficult. This seemed to be fully shared by the ploughing oxen. They rejected clean, chopped straw, and would have nothing but the chaff from old-fashioned threshing-floors!

On Tuesday morning at six o'clock, the Thomsons took the road for Nikosia, the capital of Cyprus, in a comfortable carriage drawn by four horses. They travelled eastward along the shore, greeting the snow-capped Lebanons across the sea. Turning northward they entered the breezy uplands, with wooded mountains, purling streams, and open spaces bright with blossoms; passing Stavrovounos—lit. Crosshill—the old Olympus, on the right. Glimpses were obtained of the great plain before them, and beyond it the northern range, the main height of which, Pentadactylos, with its five peaks, suggested a half-closed fist with the thumb upright. Reaching the plain they saw from afar the bastions, minarets, and palms of Nikosia. As they approached the city the English residents seemed all to be setting out for their evening drive in light gigs and chapel-carts.

Under the hospitable roof of Mr. and Mrs. van Millingen they spent a very delightful time. Mr. van Millingen, manager of the Ottoman Bank in Nikosia, was a perfect mine of information on things political, with fine taste and accurate knowledge in antiquities.

Mr. Brown Douglas, his brother-in-law, there also on a visit, brought from Edinburgh the latest ecclesiastical news. 'We learned,' says Dr. Thomson, 'something of the social manners of the English residents. Of course all society was English. There is no dominant race so haughtily exclusive as our own. There was an English Club-house, and a pretty house it was. There were English parties, and everything to fit the official mood.'

The town is circular in form, enclosed by a wall with eleven bastions, all well preserved. The wide, deep moat served in part as a polo ground. Four gateways pierce the wall. Streets and lanes laid out according to no visible plan form a sort of labyrinth. The splendid old Gothic Cathedral of Hagia Sophia is now used as a mosque. The Anglicans would fain have worshipped in the ancient Church of St. Nicholas hard by, but as it had once been prayed in by Moslems that might not be. It is employed, however, as a grain store. The Museum was highly interesting, despite the absence of a catalogue and the presence of disorder and dirt. There is much illustrating Greek and Roman times, and many antiquities that owe their origin to the Phœnician, Assyrian, and Egyptian rulers of Cyprus.

The plain wooden bungalow that served as Governor's residence provoked the reflection that 'Britain expended her efforts in making roads and bridges, in establishing good and efficient government, and housed her officials in wooden sheds. The Venetians, like the Turks, neglected roads, but, unlike the Turks, built splendid palaces.'

Kyrenia, the only seaport on the northern coast, claimed a visit. The journey was made by carriage, over the plain and across the northern range. Thomson

was struck with the tasteful churches in the poor villages passed. 'It seemed a good sign of the people that their churches were so much superior to the houses they were content with for themselves.' The mountain scenery was enchanting, rugged heights and deep glens, sweet glades and shady woods. There was evidence also of the reafforestation carried on by the British on a grand scale. Gradually the shore, the sea, and the white-tipped mountains of Asia Minor, towering over Saul's boyhood's home, came into full view. Kyrenia with its old Venetian fortifications lay on the coast-line. The road was shaded by broad, green trees, avenue-like, the carob or locust-tree being specially prominent. The travellers were welcomed to the Government Hospital, a two-storey building, with a garden bright with flowers, and a cheerful veranda. The two English ladies in charge were independently supported, and so were free to do Christian work. They noted a pleasing absence of bigotry among Moslems and Greeks. There were several native nurses and assistants, the doctor being a Syrian graduate of Beyrout College.

The great Crusading castle of St. Hilarion, conspicuous on its precipitous peak in the mountains, was the object of a morning ride. The Venetian fortress guarding the harbour was visited in the afternoon. It is now used as a prison, and as barracks for native police. Attention is arrested on entering by a fine tomb erected to the memory of a Turkish warrior who fell at the capture of the fort three hundred years ago. The memorial remains, but alas! the hero's name has vanished, and he is forgotten. *Vanitas vanitatum*. Through underground chambers a 'holy well' was reached, reputed to cure all diseases. 'It looked dirty enough to cause not a few.' The prisoners



WOMAN IN BETHLEHEM
(p. 172)

looked on the whole genial and not unattractive ruffians. Most were in for goat-stealing; few for crimes of violence.

After a quiet Sunday a visit was made to the Premonstratensian Monastery of Bellapais. The cloisters, of a highly decorative form of Gothic, are nearly perfect. The little chapel is still in use for the Greek service, adorned with quaint pictures. Under the refectory a vaulted and pillared chamber is also well preserved. At one corner of the cloisters is a gorgeous white marble sarcophagus, dating from the days of the Antonines. A hole bored in the bottom showed that it had been used as a drinking trough. How loudly it proclaimed that 'the glory of this world passeth away.' The splendours of Roman, Lusignan, and Turkish dominion have passed over it in succession, and are gone.

In the afternoon the party recrossed the mountains on the way back to Nikosia. They met a priest with an attendant carrying the consecrated elements on his way to give Communion to a dying person. His hair hung in matted locks over his shoulders. It appears that after his ordination the priest's hair and beard are never cut. The hair, usually coiled up under the tall hat, appeared innocent of comb and brush as well as of scissors. Thomson was tempted to wonder if, as their hair was not cut after ordination, their faces were not washed after baptism. The ancient Greeks were fond of the bath.

Dr. and Mrs. Thomson set out next day for Famagusta. The drive along the plain was hot and dusty. Towards evening they caught sight of the sea. On the right amid tall poplars was a double-domed church, containing the reputed tomb of the Cypriot apostle, Barnabas, whom we last hear of as proceeding to his

native isle with his nephew, John Mark. On the coast to the left they saw the sand dunes marking the site of Salamis, to which Paul and Barnabas sailed on their first missionary journey.

Rising above the walls and bastions of Famagusta, conspicuous among palms, poplars, and cypress trees, were the towers and gables with traceried windows of the ruined churches. A waterless fountain was passed, the building of which was begun to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, and for some reason never completed. Quarters were found in Varoshia, the new town to the south, in a clean but meagrely furnished hotel, where the cuisine left something to be desired : but generous friends more than made up for the deficiencies.

Guided by the harbour-master, who spoke excellent English, they visited the old city, which, although inhabited, in its dilapidation almost resembles Pompeii. The imposing Cathedral of St. George, now a mosque, like that in Nikosia, suggests a resemblance to Notre Dame. The floor is roughly paved with gravestones. The line of the church is east and west. A curious effect is produced by the arrangement of prayer carpets at such an angle that the worshippers may look towards Mecca.

Hard by was the Moslem school. 'It was amusing to see consequential little Turks with red fez caps and miniature frock-coats going out and in, with slate suspended from their wrist and book-satchel on their back. The mixture of Eastern and Western garb affected by the official Turk is strange enough when the wearer is grown up ; it becomes grotesque when worn by a little six-year-old boy.'

On the way to the strongly fortified harbour a large apartment was shown as the dining-room of Othello.

The arms of Cristoforo il Moro over the door lend a semblance of truth to the tradition, although nothing in il Moro's history could have suggested the plot of the tragedy to the great dramatist.

Some hours were spent, not to much profit, among the partly excavated ruins of ancient Salamis. The sculptured fragments that remain belong to a later than Apostolic time. Nothing was seen connected with the great city where Evagoras so successfully resisted the arms of the Persians. The line of the ancient breakwater forming the harbour of Salamis was marked by a ripple on the water.

Under the expert guidance of a local friend another visit was paid to the city. From the roof of the cathedral thirty-seven ruined churches were counted; one, with elegant lancet windows, suggested Melrose Abbey. Thomson visited many of these churches for the sake of their frescoes, most of which had suffered sadly from the winter rains. St. George and the Dragon appeared to be a popular subject—St. George being patron saint of Cyprus as well as of England. One series illustrated the history of John the Baptist. Many were crude, but some were the work of artists, showing the influence of Tintoretto and Paul Veronese.

Broad passages under the bastions led to the armoury, where in old times defensive armour was made, and swords and spears forged and tempered. Issuing from the Land Gate near by, they saw the moat, more nearly in its original condition than that at Nikosia. The walls and bastions probably represent an earlier stage in the science of fortification than those of Nikosia, although more advanced than those of Kyrenia. The building as seen in the masonry of the vaults might almost have been completed yesterday.

Lunch was enjoyed along with Mr. and Mrs. Ongley, most hospitable of friends, in the open court of the barracks. This building was originally the palace of the Venetian Governor. In front of the spacious court was an arcade of three arches, with Tuscan columns between. In the ornamentation the Lion of St. Mark was naturally prominent. A visit was made to the prison, where a glance at the dietary showed plainly enough that most of the prisoners were better off as regards food than they were at home.

The journey to Larnaka was made by carriage. The travellers put up at a hotel to which Thomson gives a good name. It has a fine outlook, facing the sea. Here acquaintance was made with the missionaries, Mr. Easson and his medical colleague, Presbyterians representing the Covenanting Church of America. In this Church only Psalms are sung in worship. The members will not vote for magistrates or Congressmen in U.S.A., because the Government has not established Presbyterianism as the National Religion, nor entered into a covenant with God. With all this narrowness of view they were generous and delightful men. They were greatly busied caring for a multitude of Armenian refugees, of whom gratitude was not an outstanding characteristic. The missionaries did not think the authorities in Cyprus very favourable to their work. When their Church proposed to establish a Mission in the island Mr. Easson interviewed the Governor, and was received with great courtesy. The Governor expressed pleasure that schools were to be opened. As to the teaching of religion he was dubious. In his view it seemed that, after all said and done, any religion was good enough if a man lived up to it. His attitude of mind is said to be too common among Government officials. If

true, it is hardly to their credit as representing a Christian country.

Larnaka was *en fête* the following morning, expecting the new Governor, Sir W. Haynes Smith—flags flying everywhere, triumphal arches and inscriptions of welcome. From the steamer *Hellas* he came ashore in a steam launch. On the pier the populace, headed by the officials and a few very soldierly policemen, gave him a rousing reception. He walked through the crowd with quiet dignity, hat in hand, bowing his acknowledgments. Having seen him safely into his carriage, our travellers entrusted themselves and their belongings to a couple of stalwart Greeks in a small boat, who speedily set them upon the deck of the *Hellas*. As the only passengers, they had the choice of all the cabins. They heard the anchor being slowly weighed ; the engines began to throb ; then came the tremor caused by the revolving screw ; the mountains of Cyprus gradually sank from view, and they took farewell of the beautiful island of Venus.

At Haifa they were met by Dr. Vartan of Nazareth and his two daughters. After a night in the hotel on Mount Carmel they rode along the ridge of the mountain to the eastern point known as el-Mahraqah, the place of Elijah's sacrifice, and were refreshed with water from the spring a little way down the slope. They forded the Kishon with some difficulty owing to the softness of the bottom, and rode over the plain to Nazareth.

CHAPTER XV

Celebration of Passover by Samaritans on Mount Gerizim.

As the festival season was still in full swing in Safad, Dr. and Mrs. Thomson decided to gratify an old desire and pay a visit to Mount Gerizim at the time of the Samaritan Passover.¹ Thomson's acquaintance with the history and religion of this strange people lends more than usual interest to his observations. The presence of Miss Vartan and her sister, to whom English and Arabic were equally familiar, made intercourse easy.

On their arrival at Nablus they found that the whole Samaritan community, except those ceremonially unclean or in the very article of death, had gone or had been carried to the top of the sacred mountain. Joining a company from the house of the missionary, Mr. Falscheer, they climbed the mountain, passing through the green orchards of oranges, figs, pomegranates, etc., on to the barren heights. Thence a wonderful view is obtained, extending from Jebel ed-Druze in the east to the Mediterranean in the west and the tumbled uplands to the south. The outlook northward is blocked by Mount Ebal. The Samaritan camp occupied a slight depression in the mountain top. Twenty-nine canvas tents were arranged in two curved lines facing each other, while one solitary tent stood a little to the south. Dr. Thomson saw nothing of 'the Tabernacle' of which Dr. A. R. Macewen

¹ *P.E.F. Quarterly Statement*, 1902, pp. 82 ff.

speaks (*Good Words*, January 1894). Everything looked bright and clean. Possibly the Samaritans, like the Jews, renew garments and utensils at the Passover.

On this day fell the Moslem feast of the Greater Beiram. Many Moslems in a state of high festive excitement pressed up the mountain. On their account some of the ceremonies may have been omitted or modified. A strong contingent of Turkish police had been hired by the Samaritans to protect them. 'We in turn,' says Dr. Thomson, 'by giving the police two mejeedies—about 7s.—as baksheesh, were taken under their protection. I can say that the police carried out their share of the bargain, cracking the crowns of their co-religionists with great apparent gusto.' The crowd, however, hampered movement, and made it impossible to investigate or sketch antiquities. Visits to certain holy places of the Samaritans had also to be forgone—the stones Joshua brought from the Jordan, the steps of Adam out of Paradise, and the place where Abraham laid Isaac on the altar.

On a little elevation north-east of the camp two cauldrons of water were boiling on a fire placed in a trench. Near by was a deep pit, about a yard wide at the top, and apparently lined with masonry. In it a fire of brushwood, continually replenished, burned furiously. Some distance to the south stood a company of twenty or thirty men in a semicircle, with a fragment of an ancient column in the centre. 'Beside this,' says Dr. Thomson, 'stood the high priest robed in green; the rest, with the exception of one man in a striped garment, were dressed in white. The high priest recited in a chant the appropriate prayers and passages from the Torah, while the rest followed him on books. Sometimes they stood, sometimes knelt,

and at the occurrence of certain words—I think the sacred names—they drew their hands over their faces and stroked their beards. A very impressive sight was this semicircle of stately, white-robed men, chanting in Hebrew the tale of the deliverance from Egypt. Occasionally the high priest turned his back upon his fellow-worshippers. Generally he looked towards them, turning his face from one end of the semicircle to the other. One could not help noticing how different in appearance the Samaritans are from the Jews. The Jews are as a rule undersized, and have many mean features; these were all above the average height, several much so, and all had noble faces. I observed that the two worshippers at the horn of the crescent at which I was standing were not joining in the chanting of the prayers. One was a young man, the other a mere lad. I was told that they were the sons of the late second high priest, who had died about two months before, and their feelings were too much for them. This one touch of feeling common to all humanity bridged the gulf between them with their ancient service and us spectators from the modern world of the West. I cannot tell whether it is part of their regular service or not, but at one point, when the Moslems were specially exasperating, the high priest turned towards them and began to recite in Arabic a prayer for long life and prosperity to the Sultan, to which the Moslems responded with vehement *amens*.’

At this point the party retired for supper some distance from the worshippers, lest the camp should be polluted by a crumb of their leavened bread. They could see, however, all that was going on—the chanting worshippers, the tenders of the fires, and the Moslems surging hither and thither.

Supper finished, they returned to the Samaritans, who moved in a body to a point near the pit and the cauldrons. Seven lambs were brought forward, each held by two men, the company forming a circle round them. The high priest began again his recitative, joined by numbers of those standing in the circle. At last, when the sun was setting—'And the whole assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel shall kill it in the evening'—at once all the lambs were thrown on their sides, and one in a striped robe passed rapidly from lamb to lamb, cutting the throat of each with two deft strokes. In less than a minute, with scarcely a struggle, all the lambs lay dead. Then the men came forward to kiss the hand of the high priest; the older men he kissed on the cheek.

The pressure of the Moslem crowd was now excessive, and their excitement was rising. It needed all the efforts of the police to keep them from breaking through the ring of celebrants and desecrating the sacrifice by touching the lambs. The Samaritans, probably moved by this risk of desecration, seemed to resent our curiosity, discarding their ordinary courtesy. One of them said to Miss Vartan, who was forced close to him by the press, 'You Christians believe that your Messiah has fulfilled all that this means: why do you press so curiously to see what we do?'

A woman taken sick and supposed to be dying, amid some excitement was carried by Moslems to the solitary tent lest the camp should be defiled by a dead body. Dr. Thomson observes that when a Samaritan dies the funeral rites are performed not by the friends but by Moslems.

Boiling water from the cauldrons was poured over the lambs, and the wool plucked off the skin until it

was bare and white as parchment. Skilfully it was done, yet with every appearance of haste. 'It was a strange spectacle, these men, the last remnant of a disappearing nation and a vanishing creed, busy upon the due fulfilment of rites instituted more than thirty centuries ago. Behind them was the western sky, golden with the rapidly fading light of the setting sun.' As the darkness deepened, the faces of the celebrants were lit up with a lurid glow from the fire beneath the cauldrons.

Each lamb was attached by the hind legs to a pole seven or eight feet long with a thin cross-bar at one end. The feet were quickly removed, and the right foreleg and shoulder cut off for the priest. The lamb was disembowelled, and as a final act the liver, which had been taken out separately, was stuck into the cavity of the body. The lambs were then laid on a hurdle and drawn towards the pit, by which their slayer stood. The fire had gone down, but the red glow from the embers lighted up his face and figure. He took each pole with lamb attached and thrust it point downwards into the glowing embers. The seven pretty well filled the pit. The hurdle was laid upon the pit's mouth, and on this herbage and mud, closely packed so as to prevent the escape of either smoke or steam: all this to the accompaniment of a monotone chant by the high priest.

It was now nine o'clock. The lambs must remain in the pit three hours. Some of the men under the guidance of the second high priest had renewed the chanting, having spread a great sheet on the ground near the short pillar. A visit was paid to the high priest in his tent, the furniture of which consisted of two couches, two or three stools, and several fine carpets. The priest was a tall, fine-looking man,

between thirty and forty years of age, with high, narrow forehead and long, glossy black beard. He entertained his guests with cigarettes, sweetmeats, and coffee.

As an act of special courtesy the host brought out the famous manuscript said to have been written by the great-grandson of Aaron. 'I had seen it,' says Dr. Thomson, 'some fourteen months before, in the semi-darkness of the Samaritan synagogue; now, by the bright light of the lamp, I was much better able to examine it. The material is parchment, and looks very old, but not being a connoisseur of parchment, that was no guide to me. The characters were much faded. They seemed to be the ordinary Samaritan characters. If these were in use when the manuscript was written, it could hardly be dated later than the end of the second Christian century. The script is transitional between the angular script found on the Moabite Stone and in the Sinjirli inscription and the square characters of our ordinary Hebrew manuscripts. This square character begins to appear in Egypt, if I mistake not, as early as 100 B.C.; on the other hand, the angular character appears in the Palmyrene inscriptions as late as the middle or end of the third century. I am not aware that the angular was ever used for writing. The Kefr Bir'im inscription, dated A.D. 300, is certainly in square characters, and the Samaritan is an earlier stage of development. The manuscript is in a wonderful case of embossed silver, which a correspondent of the *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly* decides to be three hundred years old. The high priest said it had been presented to them by Baron Rothschild. I could decipher little but individual letters in the old manuscript, but the copies which were for sale were easily read. With a mild aspect

of wonder the high priest heard me read a verse or two.'

According to the high priest, the Samaritan community of Gaza died out sixty years before. He knew nothing of Samaritan communities in Cæsarea and Ashkelon mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela. He never heard of the Samaritans in Alexandria referred to by Josephus. Nor did he know anything of the Greek version which Josephus says the Samaritans made as an offset to the Septuagint. 'He said, however,' continues Dr. Thomson, 'that when Ptolemy sent to Palestine for seventy translators, they in Jerusalem sent sixty-five and they in Samaria sent five. When they arrived in Egypt they were placed each in a cell by himself. After they had completed the translation of the Torah it was found that while the five Samaritans differed in words, the sense they expressed was the same. He said nothing as to the work of the sixty-five Jews, but he added the astounding information that they still possessed the five versions made by their representatives. I told him he could get almost any price he liked to ask for any one of these. He said that Petermann and Merx had seen them and made copies of portions of them. I tried to let him know that within a fortnight after either of these learned men reached Europe every scholar in Europe and America would be aware of it. When I told Mr. Falscheer the following morning he said, "The Samaritans are all awful liars." He, however, promised to gather the Samaritans together when I should return, as I then hoped to do in six months, and we could examine all their manuscripts and see if there were any Greek ones among them. Unfortunately I was unable to carry out my purpose, so the question remains where it was.'

The high priest was summoned by his second in command to the eating of the lambs in what was certainly less than three hours. The time was probably measured by the repetition of certain prayers. Everything was beautifully clear in the moonlight. The covering was removed from the pit amid a cloud of steam. One by one the lambs were brought out and put in new baskets. In the moonlight they looked too small and black to be lambs. One of the last to be brought up fell back into the pit. There was competition for the honour; then a man went down into the glowing pit and brought up part of the lamb. After a few minutes' rest and breathing he went down for the remainder. His exhaustion showed how hazardous it was to brave the great heat and deadly fumes. Some twenty years before, when Dr. Vartan was present, the same thing occurred.

The baskets containing the roast lambs were placed on the great sheet mentioned above. Then, with loins girt and staves in their hands, the Samaritans ate the Passover, some standing, some sitting on their heels, and others in an intermediate posture. Unleavened bread and bitter herbs were part of the repast. Portions were given to a number of girls sitting near by. When the men had eaten, the baskets with the remaining contents were carried to the women and children in the tents. Everything left of the lambs—even particles of hair and bits of skin—was scrupulously gathered and, along with the portion consecrated to the high priest, burned to ashes.

The sick woman was still alive, and was given a bit of a Passover lamb's liver. Though fevered and delirious, she improved, and had not died when the party left Nablus. It is a superstition among them that eating the Passover has a curative effect. They

tell of moribund persons being carried to the sacred mountain who, having partaken, remarkably revived. But they are not very confident, as the presence of the tent shows.

At a farewell meeting with the high priest conversation turned on questions concerning the Messiah, a subject on which his ideas were rather vague. 'The Samaritans,' says Dr. Thomson, 'expect some one to come, but what he is to be and what he will do they are not sure. Mr. Falscheer told me that they invented theories of their Messiah for the benefit of him and other questioners. I asked the high priest how he interpreted Gen. xlix. 10. He said it should be "till thou come to Shiloh"—a reading certainly not in my copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch.' It seemed to be his idea that when Judah came to Shiloh with Rehoboam the sceptre departed. The high priest's father and predecessor thought that Shiloh meant Solomon, by whose innovations Judah forfeited the sceptre.

In the Samaritan poem discovered by Merx the Messiah is called Tahev, which is rendered 'the returner.' 'He is to restore the temple on Mount Gerizim, discover the holy vessels, bring back the Jews to the true faith, conquer seven nations, and, having lived 110 years, to die full of honour. Many of the phrases suggest our Lord's conversation with the woman of Sychar. Robinson (*Res.* ii. 278) says that the Samaritan youth who showed him about the holy places called the Messiah "Mahdi."'

It was well after midnight before they, with many salaams, took farewell of the kindly and hospitable high priest. The moonlight, as always in Syria when the moon is nearly full, was piercingly clear. There was no difficulty in riding down the rocky path to Nablus.

Ebal, the sombre mountain north of the pass, over two hundred feet higher than Gerizim, was ascended next day, and the following morning saw the travellers on the road for home. The only incident worth mention on the way was a fall which Mrs. Thomson had from her horse. For a moment she was in considerable danger, but happily she escaped with a few bruises.

CHAPTER XVI

Illness—Necessity to Leave Palestine—Grief of the People—Honour of Learning — Scottish Churches' Memorial in Jerusalem—Return to Scotland—A Bit of the Orient—Higher Critical Movement—Thomson's Share in the Controversy—The World in the Patriarchal Period—Monotheism the Primal Faith.

WITH the close of the festival season work was resumed in Safad and carried on with vigour and fair success. The girls' school attended by Moslem and Jewish girls was satisfactory. In the boys' school the difficulties in the way were naturally greater, and Thomson somewhat sadly notes, 'there are no Jews at all attending.' His own special work, however, among the young fellows was as interesting and hopeful as ever. Advancing summer brought the Tiberias missionaries to the breezy city on the uplands. With the two doctors and Mr. Soutar and their households, the Friedmans, and Miss Ford, an American lady who had come for missionary work among the villages, there was quite a little community in which much happy and stimulating intercourse was enjoyed. But there was a double shadow that grew darker with passing months. Mrs. Thomson's health became more and more a cause of anxiety, and Dr. Thomson himself suffered from constantly recurring and weakening attacks of malaria. Very reluctantly the doctors came to the conclusion that they ought not to face another summer in Palestine. This involved changes in many of their plans,



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(p. 172)

but, accepting the inevitable, they made arrangements to leave the country at the end of the next school year, in April 1899.

Their departure was the occasion of grief universal and sincere. They were held in high honour and affection by a wide circle of native friends, to whom they had become deeply attached. In many things the people resemble overgrown children, with somewhat rudimentary ethical ideas. They are capable of great devotion, enthusiasm, and self-sacrifice, but they easily relapse into subtleties and trivial deceptions. Logic is lost upon them. Their thinking is all done in pictures and parables. They are quite unrestrained in the expression of their emotions. Tears and smiles are readily at their command. Stormy gusts of passion are quickly succeeded by tranquil calm as of a summer evening. Nothing, however, could shake their confidence in the integrity and goodwill of our friends, who found them very lovable, with all their peculiarities.

The man of learning has always commanded reverence in the East. Dr. Thomson's reputation for scholarship won for him a position of dignity and respect in the popular mind, while his kindly disposition and unaffected friendliness gave him an influence ever used for very noble ends.

For his all too brief residence in Palestine, with the opportunities it brought him of Biblical study amid the scenes of the sacred history and under the spell of its atmosphere and background, Thomson was profoundly grateful. Intercourse with the people gave him a certain insight into Oriental psychology without which no Biblical interpreter is adequately equipped. His experience lent fresh richness alike in colour and content to all his thinking, the results of which are seen in his subsequent writings. Years of familiarity

with the land wrought in him none of the disillusionment of which the hasty tourist often complains. He was too 'far ben' to be much affected by superficial things. Each new day brought its own tale of vital interest. We can understand, therefore, why in later years he was a convinced and earnest supporter of the Scottish Churches' Scheme to erect a Memorial College and Chapel in Jerusalem to the men and women of Scottish blood who fell in winning freedom for the Holy Land. The College is designed to afford facilities to divinity students, young ministers, and others for just the kind of studies which he himself so highly prized. He saw clearly the advantage certain to accrue to the religious thought and life of Sootland.

Returning to this country in the spring of 1899, Dr. and Mrs. Thomson brought with them a bit of the Orient in the persons of M. Amina Faris, and Qattar, a maid who had served with them during all their stay in Safad. This eased for them a little the wrench of parting. Ere long Qattar, after the manner of her people, fell a victim to violent nostalgia, and returned to the country of bright skies, to 'paralyse' her friends with marvellous tales from the far land of the setting sun. M. Amina's fine character, gentle ways, and wonderful skill with the needle quickly established her in popular favour. Unfortunately she could not resist the severities of our climate, which brought on a serious illness. For a time her life was despaired of, but the tough Palestinian constitution asserted itself in a remarkable way. It was impossible, however, to take further risks, so amid heartfelt regrets she sailed from Liverpool for Palestine on August 8, 1902. Through the succeeding years, although never strong, she has exercised a very beautiful and gracious

influence, especially among the patients in the hospital at Tiberias.

Thomson was warmly welcomed back to Stirling. He easily resumed his place in the life of the town and of Allan Park Church. The stories of Eastern experiences he had to tell enlivened many a social gathering. The fresh 'light from the Orient' which he cast upon many old themes was eagerly relished by the young people's societies. While taking his full share in the work of the Church, in the discussion of public questions, and in support of benevolent enterprises, his chief interest still lay in the realm of sacred learning.

For over twenty years the Higher Critical movement, of which Professor Robertson Smith was the pioneer in Scotland, and Professors Cheyne and Driver the leading protagonists in England, had been running its course. Attention had been directed mainly to the Old Testament. It was claimed that decisions had been reached regarding the date, authorship, and method of composition of the Old Testament Scriptures that were plainly in conflict with traditional views. Perfect agreement among scholars as to details was not to be hoped for, but it might be taken as certain that the books hitherto ascribed to Moses were really composite, incorporating various documents, the work of many hands through a long history, and finally completed by Ezra. The other portions of Scripture were not less drastically handled. The Critical labours of so many gifted and learned men naturally produced results of the highest value to the student of the Bible. It is hardly too much to say that the Old Testament underwent a resurrection. It became a living book. It is no longer, as Sir G. A. Smith has happily said, 'the quarry of the excavator or the

archæologist—a mere foundation packed away out of sight beneath the more glorious structure that has been raised upon it. Far rather—if I may borrow a metaphor from the political geography of the day—far rather is the Old Testament the “Hinterland” of the New; part of the same continent of truth, without whose ampler areas and watersheds the rivers which grew to their fulness in the new dispensation could never have gained one-tenth of their volume or their influence.’

But while willingly acknowledging their debt to the Critics, there were not a few scholarly men who felt that many of the results claimed were by no means assured. With these Thomson found himself most in sympathy. Doughty champions on both sides kept the battle going. Thomson did not range himself under either flag. His ‘party,’ like that of Lord Rosebery on a famous occasion, was ‘covered by his own hat.’ He would take nothing at second hand, no matter what great names sanctioned it. He must see the reasons with his own eyes, and judge for himself as to their validity. The support which he gave to any theory was therefore strictly discriminating.

This is seen in his review, in 1901, of a book published by that brilliant Orientalist, D. S. Margoliouth, Laudian Professor of Arabic in Oxford, entitled *Lines of Defence of Biblical Revelation*. While generally approving Margoliouth’s attack upon Critical positions, he subjects the work to the most ruthless scrutiny, not hesitating to characterize some contentions as ‘bizarre and eccentric,’ some arguments as ‘subtle to attenuation,’ and some alleged facts as ‘to say the least, doubtful.’ He is interested in Margoliouth’s defence of David in the matter of Uriah. The alternatives before the king were, death by stoning for

Bathsheba, or an honourable death in battle for Uriah. He quotes Duncker as saying that no other Oriental potentate would have troubled about the crime which David repented so bitterly. It would, he says, have caused few scruples to most Defenders of the Faith. When David is rebuked he yields the point without argument. 'When has this been done before or since? Mary of Scots would have declared herself above the law. Charles I. would have thrown over Bathsheba. James II. would have hired witnesses to swear away her character. Mohammed would have produced a revelation authorizing both crimes. Charles II. would have publicly abrogated the Seventh Commandment. Queen Elizabeth would have suspended Nathan.' He shows by reference to *The Silence of Dean Maitland* what is the natural course of an ordinary man who 'falls into the meshes of the devil.'

Recent Commentaries on Daniel by Professor Driver of Oxford and Dr. Cobern, an American divine, formed the subject of a brochure issued the same year, in which he dealt faithfully with the shortcomings of these scholars, and argued vigorously in favour of the theory advocated in his own *Commentary*. Although differing from him in the main, he commends Dr. Driver's evident desire to deal fairly with opponents' positions.

In 1901 appeared the volume of Professor George Adam Smith (now the Very Rev. Sir G. A. Smith, Principal of the University of Aberdeen) entitled *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*. Nowhere is Dr. Smith's singular power of lucid exposition more conspicuously displayed. He describes the book as an 'attempt to appreciate the effects of Criticism upon the materials for preaching which the

Christian Church has always drawn from the larger half of her canonical Scriptures' (p. 3). Exhibiting as it did the scholar's equipment and the preacher's gifts and temperament, the success of the book was immediate. The answer he gave to the question, Can we still receive the Old Testament as the record of a genuine revelation from God? was an unhesitating affirmative. His frank acceptance, however, of the main positions of Higher Criticism as fully established caused a flutter in the dove-cotes of orthodoxy. One paragraph in particular, on p. 72, roused a storm of protest: ' . . . we may say that Modern Criticism has won its war against the Traditional Theories. It only remains to fix the amount of the indemnity.' A movement was begun which culminated in his trial for heretical teaching.

The spring of 1902 saw Dr. Thomson's contribution to the ensuing discussion, his *Modern Criticism Examined* (Andrew Elliot, Edinburgh), a review of Professor Smith's book. The question with which it is occupied, as Thomson puts it, is, 'How can a Minister make useful sermons on the Old Testament on the assumption that the results of Modern Criticism are to be accepted as incontestable?' The volume contains much of which Thomson warmly approves. He thinks it not only right, but laudable, for one in Professor Smith's position to estimate what would be the net result were the Critical positions accepted. His complaint is that Dr. Smith has gone farther, and has assumed it as incontestable that the Critics have made good their contentions. This, Thomson held, was far from being true. He proceeded to show that in a multitude of cases the evidence relied on is totally inadequate, and that positions vital to the Critical Theory are not only incapable of proof but are demon-

strably unsound. His keenness at times led him a little too far. Reflections upon the author criticized should have been omitted, and his arguments would have lost nothing in cogency by being presented with more of *suaviter in modo*. That he deals with points and details rather than with broader aspects and relations is due to his type of mind—analytic rather than synthetic. But after all, a structure cannot be in a good way when so many of the props on which it rests are broken down.

Thomson would have nothing to do with heresy hunts, which have never been a satisfactory way of dealing with error. He believed that the spark of truth flashed forth in the clash of opposing opinions, and was all for freedom of discussion. The trial was carried out, but happily with the result that the liberty of thought and debate which he desired have been enjoyed in the Church from that day to this.

Residence in Palestine had stimulated Thomson's interest in ancient history and archæology. One outcome of this is seen in a lecture read to the Y.M.C.A., Stirling, in 1903, on 'The State of the World during the Patriarchal Period.' He gave the youth of Stirling an account of the discoveries in Babylon, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt which during the nineteenth century had shed a flood of light upon the days of Abraham and his successors. It was no world of empty spaces and vast silences through which the Patriarchs walked as pioneers in untrodden paths. Light breaks upon it from impressed clay tablet, sculptured rock, inscribed stone, and from the remains of city, temple, fortress, and palace. It was a world already throbbing with a multitudinous and eager life; of settled communities and wide-roaming nomads: a world in which kings ruled and led armies to victory or defeat; in which

men lived under complex, formulated laws administered by recognized officials ; while the prevalence and power of religion is everywhere manifest. Men had learned to exploit the riches of land and sea, to use them for their own comfort, and especially to adorn the temples of the gods. Remote regions were linked together by the caravans of the merchantmen. Everything proclaims a stage of civilization which could have been reached only after millenniums of progress. This might be startling to those who had been reared on Archbishop Ussher's chronology, but after all it only confirms what is not obscurely indicated in the Scriptures themselves. The kings mentioned in Gen. xiv. are no longer mere names, but personalities, of whose part in history we have some knowledge. In the account of Abraham's purchase of Machpelah the rights of property are recognized. As the custom is to this day in the East, he might purchase the land without becoming the owner of the trees growing on it. The price was paid in silver currency according to a settled convention.

Thomson draws a picture of a Canaanite city of those far-off days. The heart or nucleus was the citadel tower, erected on a mound. Round it gathered the low, probably hive-shaped houses of the inhabitants. In the centre was the market-place, where meetings of the populace were held, and where in time of danger the cattle of the district were gathered. In the citadel was the royal residence, the city sanctuary and altar. Streets there would be none, as in Eastern villages to-day. Round the city would be a rampart of earth faced with stone. Each gate would be defended by strongly built stone towers. In the opening of the gate the elders sat to try causes and pronounce judgment. On a cleared space of

ground outside the entrance the youths of the city exercised themselves in arms, and here the travelling companies of merchants would unload their camels and pitch their tents.

The Tel-Amarna letters afford vivid glimpses of conditions in Palestine at a later time, while from Egyptian wall-paintings some idea may be gained of what the nations overthrown by Joshua were like. The Hittites are portrayed with yellow skins, protruding nose, and pigtailed which indicate Mongol affinities. The Amorites seem to be of Caucasian race, with fair hair, blue eyes, and pale pinkish skins. The Canaanites or Phœnician lowlanders approximated to the Jewish type. The Amorite dwelt in the mountains, the Canaanite in the plain. The Hittite confined himself to the cities. The Hivites or Perizzites were probably not so much a nation as the collected fragments of various races living in villages, the predecessors of the modern Fellahin.

Thomson's examination of the religion of those remote times led him to think that Monotheism might be the faith of primitive man, and not, as many scholars maintain, a conception reached only at the end of a long process of evolution. This theme he afterwards developed more fully in his brochure, *Monotheism the Original Faith of Mankind*. 'It has been assumed,' he says, 'that the earliest religion was fetishism combined with ancestor worship; that men gradually rose to polytheism, then to henotheism, and last of all attained Monotheism.' He points out that in one notable passage the Apostle Paul plainly teaches the exact opposite (Rom. i. 21 ff.): 'Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God . . . but became vain in their imaginations . . . and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an

image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.' Here polytheism is not an ascent, but a descent : it is due not to a purifying of fetishism, but to a corruption of Monotheism. If the generally received hypothesis were true, then the farther back we go in the history of religion, the lower and more degraded we shall find the system of belief. As a matter of fact, the nearer we approach the sources, the purer is the religion and the loftier the morality. In the mythology of Babylon and Assyria reflected in the Creation and Deluge poem the gods are seen to have been originally men who were born, wed, and had progeny. Behind and above them all is God, unnamed and unnameable. Something like this seems to be assumed in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. In the classic mythology of Greece, behind the gods of Olympus we are conscious of the presence of a mightier deity. Plato in the *Timæus* represents God (ὁ θεός) as creating the gods. Modern Brahmanism with its hundreds of thousands of gods, as compared with the purer Vedism, is cited as a historic instance of degradation. Buddhism was certainly not polytheistic to begin with, but it has run to this in its development in Ceylon, Burma, China, and Japan. The faiths of several humble peoples are scrutinized with significant results : most striking in the case of the Karens of Burma, and of the Ainus of Japan. Both races were thought too degraded to have any conception of God at all. Yet Mackenzie Smeaton of the Bengal Civil Service, in his book, *The Loyal Karens of Burma*, testifies : 'The Karens are remarkable for believing in one eternal God, creator of all things, who is like the air and lives in the sky ; who originally dwelt amongst men, and only left them after fruitless endeavours to draw them to himself.'

And the Rev. John Batchelor, C.M.S., in his work, *The Ainu of Japan*, tells us that the Ainu, while holding that there are gods for every conceivable object, yet believes that there is one God who towers above all, who is maker of all the others, and to whom all are responsible, for they are his servants and deputies. Similar tendencies are seen in the Roman Catholic cult of the Virgin Mother, and in the devotion paid to saints.

Thomson maintains that wherever a race has not suffered from amalgamation its religion is fundamentally a monotheism ; that the accompanying polytheism, when it can be traced, is seen to be the result of degeneration ; that where a monotheism has replaced a polytheism it is the result of external interference—*e.g.* in Judaism and Christianity by divine inspiration, and in Mohammedanism by contact with these two ' book religions ' ; and that the farther we go back in the history of any religion the more monotheistic we find it. If he has not proved that Monotheism was the primitive religion, he has at least made out a good case for careful consideration.

To this time also belongs a sketch of James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, which was published in 1906.

CHAPTER XVII

Friendships Old and New—Mr. Soutar's Death—Move to Edinburgh—Collaboration in Literary Work—Dr. S. Angus—'The Derelicts'—Dr. James Orr—Rev. Thomas Dunlop—The War—Alexander Robertson Lectureship—The Samaritans.

THE opening years of the century witnessed the renewal of many old intimacies, and the formation of new friendships. Professor James Robertson of Glasgow University spent the summer of 1902 in Stirling. His Oriental scholarship and long residence in the East furnished much common ground between him and Thomson, and many happy and profitable hours were passed together. Under Robertson's presidency Thomson joined the Glasgow University Oriental Society. The members were mainly former students of Robertson's who valued the Society as a bond of union between them and their beloved teacher. Then, and later under the presidency of Professor Stevenson, Dr. Robertson's distinguished successor in the Hebrew chair, Thomson contributed learned papers and took an interesting part in the discussions.

That same year the present writer was settled in Allan Park Church, and then began a friendship and partnership in study and literary work which lasted to the end of Thomson's life. One of the first joint enterprises was a criticism of Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*. The resulting series of lectures roused some interest at the time. A scheme for the purchase and development of the plain of Gennesaret as an industrial

adjunct to the Galilee Mission was proposed, and the support of a number of able business men was secured. An offer of the land at a reasonable price was obtained, and a wire authorizing the purchase was actually in readiness when the Lords' decision in the Church Case fell with shattering effect. In view of the sacrifices they might have to make as loyal sons of the Church whose possessions had been filched under form of legal process, the promoters of the scheme felt bound to hold their hands. The propitious moment passed. The opportunity was lost. The land was acquired by the Jews, and subsequent developments have shown what magnificent possibilities were here, regarding it simply as an investment.

Thomson never quite got rid of the fever contracted in Palestine, and at times he suffered severely. He frequently found relief in the genial air of the south of England, taking the opportunity to visit the libraries in Manchester, Oxford, London, and especially Cambridge, where he had much pleasant intercourse with his old friends, the learned ladies Mrs. Gibson and Mrs. Lewis. He derived benefit from a visit to Belgium and Holland in the spring of 1904, and to Italy in 1905. Meantime Mr. Gray, Mrs. Thomson's father, had passed away on December 7, 1903. He was a man held in the highest esteem for probity and honour, who left behind him a fine record of valuable public service.

In December 1905 came news from Palestine of the death of Mr. Soutar, whose friendship and co-operation had meant so much to Thomson in his Safad days. Mr. Soutar was a man of sound scholarship and generous mind. He had gathered a library of quite exceptional range and value. Thomson and the present writer succeeded in raising sufficient money to purchase the library for the use of the missionaries.

Access to such a collection was an unspeakable boon to them, and to friends passing through the country. During the War, unfortunately, it suffered severely from the ignorant vandalism of the enemy. What remained of the books after the Armistice were found in the hospital garret in a condition suggesting the ravages of the Gadarean swine. Something has since been done to make good the loss, but the need is still very great..

Mr. Gray's death led to changes, and among other things making residence in Edinburgh desirable was Mrs. Thomson's wish to be somewhat nearer to her widowed mother. The move was made in April 1906, to a house at No. 38 Granby Road, in the Craigmillar district of the city. At a Congregational Meeting of Allan Park Church held on the 20th of March, Dr. Thomson was presented with a D.D. hood, a rose-bowl, and an illuminated address which expresses most generous, friendly appreciation of the services which, through many years, he had so ungrudgingly rendered alike to the community and to the congregation. It continues: 'Accept this testimony to your great usefulness amongst us, and this expression of our warm gratitude. While we in Stirling have so much to thank you for, we are glad to know that your literary gifts and stores of learning have been of benefit far beyond any locality, and have secured for you high eminence in the world of letters. Let us offer you hearty congratulations on the academic distinction bestowed upon you, which shows that your merits are suitably recognized in the halls of learning as well as in the Courts of the Church.' It concludes with good wishes and prayers for blessing upon him and his 'amiable partner in life' from their grateful and attached fellow-members in Allan Park Church.

It is signed by R. Taylor, Preses, and P. Macfarlan, Session Clerk. Ex-Provost Yellowlees handed over the gifts in a characteristically happy speech; and Mrs. Manners invested the Doctor with the hood of his degree to the music of rousing cheers.

In Edinburgh Thomson joined the Session of Grange United Free Church, of which the present writer had become the minister, and gave willingly of his time and strength to the work of the congregation. He also served on various Committees of the Church, especially on the Jewish Committee, where his experience in Palestine and his knowledge of the situation there lent his counsel peculiar value.

It was in the autumn of this year (1906) that the work of joint author and editor of *The Temple Bible Dictionary* was undertaken at the instance of Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., Publishers, London. For several decades there had been great activity in various fields of research, the results of which were of high importance for students of the Bible. In some larger dictionaries good work had been done in the way of focussing information available. These, however, were written from a more advanced Critical point of view than Thomson and his co-editor were able to adopt, while their size and price put them beyond the reach of many who were keenly alive to the necessity for competent and trustworthy guidance in their study of the Scriptures. It was felt that there was room for a Dictionary of the Bible which, leaving aside what was merely theoretical and speculative, should present simply and clearly the state of ascertained knowledge, at a price which should bring the latest results of scholarly investigation within the reach of all. The needs of the working clergyman, the local preacher, the class leader, and the Sunday School teacher were

kept steadily in view. The editors had both spent years of labour and study in the East, and were able, for illustration and local colour, to draw upon their own acquaintance with the lands of the Bible, the people, their manners and customs, and the conditions of their life. Many articles of special importance were written by men in the front rank of sacred scholarship.

Three years of steady work brought this enterprise to completion in December 1909. The *Dictionary* was published in the spring of 1910, and met with a generous reception in the religious press both in this country and in America.

The choice of writer of certain important New Testament articles fell on a brilliant young scholar who had just returned from a period of study on the Continent, the Rev. Samuel Angus, Ph.D., now Professor S. Angus, D.D., D.Lit., Ph.D., of St. Andrew's College, Sydney. This acquaintance rapidly ripened into a close and precious friendship. Considerable difference in point of view lent colour and interest to the discussion of Critical questions, for which both were singularly well equipped. Battle was no sooner joined than the buttons disappeared from the foils, and surely never warriors more keenly relished the *gaudium certaminis*. 'Greatly enjoyed visit of Dr. Angus,' says Dr. Thomson in his diary. The two walked together, ransacked the bookshops together, and returned to the study for the inevitable duel. After Dr. Angus's settlement in Sydney their friendly debate was continued by letter. The more elastic academic conditions prevailing in the Commonwealth made possible an occasional visit to the old country, when matters dealt with in correspondence could be more thoroughly discussed. These were times of great mutual delight. When Dr. Angus came home in the autumn of 1923 to



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find that his old friend had passed away, he felt that a great light had faded from his horizon.

The circle of intimate friends of those days included Professor James Robertson of Glasgow, who on his retiral from active duty came to reside in Edinburgh; the Rev. Robert Henderson, who with a burden of nearly ninety years upon his shoulders, and a record of fine service both at home and in Australia, bore himself with a certain cheerful and mature youthfulness which greatly endeared him; the Rev. James Lamont, distinguished as a botanist and microscopist; and the Rev. Dr. Mair, emeritus minister of Earlston, the famous ecclesiastical lawyer, to whose initiative the cause of Church Union in Scotland owes more than perhaps will ever be known.

Thomson was also a leading spirit in a society the members of which playfully describe themselves as ‘The Derelicts.’ It is composed of retired ministers and missionaries living on the south side of Edinburgh. They meet periodically in each other’s houses according to a system of rotation. Papers, mainly theological, varied with topics of immediate general interest, are discussed, and the host and hostess for the day entertain them to tea. The weapons of intellect are thus preserved from rust, and much social pleasure is enjoyed.

Thomson’s old friend, the Rev. Robert Henderson, entered into rest on December 28, 1910. He left much interesting material dealing with his long and varied career. Along with the late Mr. J. B. Gillies, Dr. Thomson revised and edited this material. The resulting book was published by Andrew Elliot in 1911, under the title *Ninety Years in the Master’s Service*. ‘With such materials at his command,’ said a reviewer, ‘it would not be easy for any one to write

a dull book. For Mr. Henderson it was impossible. From the first page to the last it reflects his own radiant and magnetic personality.' Through his eyes we see the 'twenties' and 'thirties' of last century: the Church, its leaders and the controversies of the time; the University, its professors and students. Ministerial experiences in Westminster, Seaton Delaval, Hexham, and the Australian wilds are vividly portrayed. Written in the light of carefully kept diaries, the book has all the value of a contemporary record.

On March 9, 1911, Dr. and Mrs. Thomson moved into a new house which had been built for them at 170 Mayfield Road. Soon afterwards Miss Gray, Mrs. Thomson's sister, took up her residence in an adjoining dwelling. Mrs. Gray, Mrs. Thomson's mother, had died on August 25, 1909, and the old home at Dunallan was broken up.

Professor James Orr, general editor of *The International Standard Bible Encyclopædia*, published by the Howard Severance Company, Chicago, enlisted Thomson's aid as a contributor. For this important work, which may be described as reaching high-water mark of sane and cultured scholarship, he wrote articles on Alexander the Great, Apocalyptic, Samaritan Pentateuch, Jewish Religious Sects, etc., all subjects with which he had been long familiar, and on which he was entitled to speak with authority. His connection with the *Encyclopædia* led to a friendly correspondence with Mr. Howard, head of the publishing firm, which continued with mutual pleasure till the end.

In 1912 the Rev. Thomas Dunlop resigned his charge in Bootle, and came to live not far from Thomson in Edinburgh. The intimate fellowship of the far-off days was resumed, and for three years the old friends walked together again with the old delight.

But in 1915 the shadow passed between them, and 'Tom Dunlop' was not, for God took him—the fourth of "Our Year" within four months,' Thomson sadly reflects. He wrote a short biography of his friend, wherein he incorporated much of the best that Dunlop had written in prose and verse; the pious task acting partly as an anodyne to his wounded heart. It was published by Andrew Elliot in 1919, and entitled *Memoir of Thomas Dunlop*.

Thomson indulged his love of travel by visits to the Continent in May 1907, June 1910, and June 1912. His journeys to Paris were inspired by purposes of scholarly research. For the like object he paid frequent visits to the British Museum, and was grateful for much help given him there by Dr. Margoliouth. At Oxford, in the Bodleian, he also pursued his Samaritan studies, and spoke with warm appreciation of the kindness of Dr. Cowley.

Thomson's convictions on the subject of war were clear and strong. War he held to be the worst method of dealing with international disputes—a method which threw justice to the winds and relied simply on force; which revealed the most successful butchers, but left every question of right and wrong precisely where it was. In common with many keen students of European affairs, he believed that the attempt to maintain a balance of power, leading to the piling up of armaments and munitions, was bound to result in an appalling catastrophe. Such preparation for war seemed to make war inevitable. With a sad heart he saw national resources squandered upon unremunerative objects, not only laying a heavy burden upon productive industry, but putting the national existence itself in peril. He did not think, indeed, that any country, Great Britain or another, should in

present circumstances discard its means of self-protection. That would be to take the place of the ass fallen in the wilderness on which the vultures would feed. Defensive war was not only permissible: it might be the most solemn duty. Aggressive war was never less than a savage crime against humanity. He believed that it should not pass the wit of man to frame a reasonable scheme of proportionate disarmament, and to see it carried through.

Where the guilt lay for the outbreak of war in 1914 he never was in doubt. Austria acted but as the catspaw of Germany; and with the outrage perpetrated upon Belgium justice and national honour alike demanded the intervention of Great Britain. Age and physical infirmities unfitted him for campaigning, and excluded him from various forms of war service at home. But no brain and hand were busier than his in devising means to cheer and comfort the gallant men who fought our battles and suffered from wounds and sickness. He had friends and acquaintances on every front, and followed the varying fortunes of our armies with poignant interest. The tremendous conflict in the West he watched with unflagging eagerness, knowing almost every foot of the ground covered by our far-flung battle-lines, and familiar with the great events in which these storied fields had played their part. He was fascinated by the splendour of young manhood displayed on the bloody beaches, in the rough gorges and hill-slopes of Gallipoli, when by the shores of the historic Hellespont the heroism of to-day outshone the glories of the past. But chiefly he was intrigued by the victorious march through Palestine, where every tread woke sacred memories and kindled hopes of freedom for the motherland of Christ. He gave unflinching support to every measure calculated

to promote the success of our arms, shirking no personal sacrifice.

At the moment, no doubt, the Armistice brought a sense of relief to the world, but with many more, Thomson was not convinced that the time for staying hostilities had arrived. The enemy were naturally anxious that their country should escape invasion, and so might be willing to agree to conditions which afterwards they might evade. With their skill in distorting facts they might claim that their armies were undefeated, and that they had secured peace by negotiation. Passing time has proved that these were no groundless fears. He was certain that it would be better for the world, and even for the enemy themselves, if they were beaten to their knees and Berlin occupied by an army that had placed the issue beyond all debate. Sometimes it is necessary to be ruthless in order to be kind.

It would be idle to pretend that this nightmare of the nations, this orgy of violence and bloodshed, left no trace upon Thomson. For one with his acute sensibilities the daily *communiqué* brought daily suffering, and the long-drawn anxiety and agony were a heavy burden. Fortunately a task was laid upon him which compelled concentration of mental effort upon another, and widely different subject, thus furnishing partial escape from the sorrowful pre-occupations of the War. In February 1915 the University Court appointed him to the Alexander Robertson Lectureship in the University of Glasgow. His subject was 'The Samaritans: Their Testimony to the Religion of Israel.' He had now an opportunity to use the stores of learning accumulated through long years of special study. In accordance with the terms of the Lecture Trust six lectures were delivered before

the University during the year 1916. Owing to conditions created by the War, the University authorities did not insist on immediate publication. The hope that economic and other conditions might improve was not justified, and, feeling that 'for the writer time was passing,' Thomson decided to issue the book, risking the disadvantage that the English-reading public were so obsessed by the Great War and its consequences that they might have little attention to give to a book on a Biblical subject. It was accordingly published by Messrs. Oliver and Boyd in 1919.

The subject could not be adequately discussed within the compass of six lectures, and many sides of the questions at issue did not lend themselves to treatment in the form of an address. Thomson therefore abandoned the lecture form and gave to his treatment of the theme a certain rounded completeness. This he regarded as the chief work of his life. In his study of the Samaritan Pentateuch he built a new path of approach to questions of Biblical Criticism, and showed good reason for the reconsideration of many positions that are often described as 'assured.' Of necessity much is written in somewhat technical language, and for those unfamiliar with such literature the book is rather stiff reading. It seems therefore well worth while to give an account of his work in more popular style, illustrating its character and methods, and the conclusions to which he was led. This may enable even the lay reader to appreciate the important contribution here made to sacred learning. It may also help to make it plain that those who challenge the validity of advanced Critical theories are not to be labelled as unscholarly, reactionary, or obscurantist. On the other hand, it may show that certain positions

which are central to the Critical scheme are incapable of defence. The downfall of those shakes the stability of the whole Critical structure.

What is given in the next chapter has the advantage of having been revised and approved by Dr. Thomson himself.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Samaritans—Their Testimony to the Religion of Israel.

MANY and picturesque are the religious sects in the Lands of the Bible to-day, but none makes a stronger appeal to the imagination than that of the Samaritans. The circumstances of their origin, their age-long feud with the Jews, and the singular vicissitudes of their history, an experience in which romance and tragedy are so strangely mingled, present a fascinating theme for study. It is pathetic to see how a once numerous and prosperous people has dwindled. The community at Nablus, under Mount Gerizim, has shrunk to about one hundred and fifty souls in all, so that extinction stares them in the face. In a despairing effort to avoid impending doom, early in 1919 they approached the Sephardim Jews with proposals for intermarriage. Their friendly overtures were promptly and decisively repelled. One is glad to know that in the wreckage wrought by the Turks during the Great War the Samaritans escaped with comparatively little damage, and that their precious manuscripts were preserved intact.

The most prized possession of the Samaritans is the sacred copy of the Pentateuch—the five books of Moses—which they claim to have been written by Abishua, the great-grandson of Aaron. It is impossible to credit the existing manuscript with such antiquity, but the investigation of its ancestry and transmission, and the religious thought, life, and ritual

of which it has been the centre, is a matter of profound interest for Biblical students. It may shed fresh light on many questions affecting especially the composition and date of the books concerned. The books of the Bible comprise the remnant of the literature of the ancient Hebrews that has escaped destruction—an escape manifestly due to the protecting providence of God. Materials from the records of the ancient world that have survived and are available for the critical study of these documents are scanty. The rubbish heaps of Egypt, the mounds of Palestine and Mesopotamia, the ruins of Syria and Asia Minor have been in some measure explored with results which, if for this particular purpose they are meagre, are yet of priceless value. In view of all this activity a mild wonder may be expressed that a field so rich and promising as the Samaritan Pentateuch opens should have been so largely neglected.

Gesenius, to whose work a certain revival of interest in the subject was due, started with the assumption that the Massoretic—the Hebrew from which our translation was made—as compared with the Samaritan, represented the older text, and therefore, as closer to the original, should be taken as the more accurate. Variations in the Samaritan were regarded as mistakes, accidental or intentional, to be corrected by reference to the Massoretic. This assumption, now seen to be untenable, vitiated his work and that of others who followed him.

Results of real value can be reached only by means of strictly scientific study: careful research and unbiassed thought, free from prejudice or assumption, acknowledging only the authority of truth. This Dr. Thomson sought to furnish in his book, *The Samaritans: Their Testimony to the Religion of Israel*.

The work occupied him, more or less, for over thirty years. Part of that time, as we have seen, he spent in Palestine, where he consulted with the Samaritans, and witnessed their celebration of the Passover on Mount Gerizim. He examined all known and available manuscripts. Of these a valuable list is given in an appendix. He is refreshingly independent in his methods. He is neither surprised by novelty nor overawed by antiquity. As to positions widely held as secure he asks disconcerting questions, relentlessly scrutinizing the grounds on which the most confident statements are made. Neither traditional orthodoxy nor the still more uncompromising orthodoxy of the prevailing Critical school is to him sacrosanct. He is ready, on cause shown, to do battle with either in the supreme interest of truth.

Who then are the Samaritans? Their own claim is that they belong to the house of Israel. The Jews of the early Christian centuries denied the claim, and heaped opprobrium upon 'that foolish people' who dwelt in Shechem, calling them 'Cuthæans,' *i.e.* descendants of the Assyrian immigrants who took the place of the deported tribes after the fall of Samaria. This takes for granted that the entire population of the northern kingdom was carried away by the Assyrians—an assumption underlying every theory that attempts to solve the problem of the 'Lost Ten Tribes.' At first sight 2 Kings xviii. 11 seems to support this view. A brief consideration will show that the phrase, 'The King of Assyria . . . carried Israel away unto Assyria,' is a general statement with a perfectly definite meaning, which yet does not signify that every man, woman, and child of Israel was taken away.

When Tiglath-pileser took certain cities with 'Gilead

and Galilee and all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria,' we cannot suppose that these places were left without inhabitant, although no colonists were brought to replace the deported people. When the southern kingdom fell under Nebuchadnezzar we read that 'Judah was carried away captive out of his land' (2 Kings xxv. 21, cf. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20). This general statement must be taken with what is said in verse 12: 'The poorest of the land' were left 'to be vinedressers and husbandmen'; and with the further statement in verse 22 that Nebuchadnezzar made Gedaliah governor over the people that were left in the land (cf. Jer. xxxix. 10).

The Assyrian policy of deportation was designed to prevent rebellion on the part of conquered peoples. To remove the whole population of any country would only have been to shift the seat of danger. The object in view was far more certainly achieved by leaving a people leaderless. This was the method of Nebuchadnezzar, who, with Jehoiachin, 'carried away all Jerusalem'—note the general statement—'and all the princes and all the mighty men of valour . . . and all the craftsmen and the smiths . . . and the chief men of the land.' 'None remained save the poorest sort of the people of the land' (2 Kings xxiv. 14 ff.). That is to say, he removed such as were likely to inspire, or lead, or furnish weapons for a rebellion, leaving the mass of the people to pursue their ordinary avocations under an authority appointed by himself. It is a safe inference that in this he followed the practice of the Assyrians, as his empire was in all essentials a continuation of theirs. The inference is confirmed by the inscription found on Sargon's palace walls in which he tells of the conquest of Israel. The habit of monarchs in such inscriptions is to magnify their own

achievements. But Sargon boasts of having carried away only 27,280 inhabitants of the land of Samaria. Now if in Menahem's day there were 60,000 'mighty men of wealth' in Israel (2 Kings xv. 19 f.),¹ that points to a population of at least two millions. Making liberal allowance for the loss inflicted by Tiglath-pileser and others, there must have remained under Hoshea considerably over 500,000. Of these only about a twentieth were deported by Sargon. This twentieth undoubtedly comprised the same classes as were taken by Nebuchadnezzar. Here priests are specially mentioned (2 Kings xvii. 27 f.). These might lend to rebellion the glamour of religious sanction. The nineteen-twentieths that remained could be no other than the humbler members of the tribes of Israel. Speaking of them, Sargon says, 'I changed the government of the country and set over it a lieutenant of my own. . . . The tribute of the former king I imposed upon them.' Empty fields could pay no tribute, nor would a viceroy be appointed over them.

At this point Dr. Thomson makes a most interesting suggestion. Sargon does not name the deputy he appointed. In like circumstances Nebuchadnezzar appointed a Jew, Gedaliah, over those left in Judah. Is it not possible that the Assyrian monarch chose Hezekiah king of Judah as the man to represent him in governing Israel? This gains support from the tone of authority in which Hezekiah speaks to the northern tribes in matters of religion (see below). If true, it helps to clear up some chronological difficulties in connection with his reign. He is said to have begun to reign in the third year of Hoshea king of Israel

¹ Note: 50 shekels=1 maneh, 60 manehs=1 talent; therefore 60,000 men contributing 50 shekels each made up the 1000 talents.

(2 Kings xviii. 1), when Ahaz, his father, had still one or two years to live (2 Kings xvi. 2 ; xvii. 1). He must therefore have been associated with his father in the government during the last years of the latter's life. From the beginning of this joint rule his reign is reckoned in 2 Kings xviii. 9, 10. But in 2 Chron. xxix. 3 ; xxx. 1, the ' first year of his reign ' appears to have witnessed the downfall of the northern kingdom (see especially xxx. 6). May we not suppose that here his reign is reckoned from the first year of his rule over the whole of Israel as the vassal of Assyria ?

The sending of posts ' through all Israel ' as well as Judah by ' commandment of the king ' was a proceeding which surely could not have been tolerated by the lieutenant of the Assyrians had he been other than Hezekiah himself ; and obviously it would not have been undertaken had there not been a numerous population to appeal to. Later we find that Josiah's reforms applied to Israel as well as Judah (2 Chron. xxxiv. 6), and at the Passover celebrated in his eighteenth year ' the children of Israel ' were present—' all Judah and Israel ' (2 Chron. xxxv. 17, 18). This is confirmed by Josephus, whose testimony to the existence of an important Israelite remnant is all the more valuable as he would not willingly justify the Samaritans' claim to be descended from Israel. ' After these things Josiah went also to all the Israelites who had escaped captivity and slavery under the Assyrians, and persuaded them to desist from their impious practices ' (*Antiquities*, x, iv. 5).

It may be objected that when the Samaritans sought permission to share in rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem, their spokesmen claimed only that they had been worshippers of Jehovah from the days of

Esar-haddon (Ezra iv. 2), 'who brought us up hither.' Does this not negative the predominantly Israelite character of the northern people?

We have seen that if the prominent men in Israel were removed the purpose of Assyria would be achieved. We may suppose that the Assyrian colonists brought to Samaria would belong to the same class among the more turbulent and dangerous tribes in Mesopotamia. In each case the people, left leaderless, would be comparatively harmless, while the leaders, bereft of followers, would be reduced to impotence.

From the scenes portrayed on the marbles of Nineveh we learn that captives carried their property with them. The newcomers, therefore, although few in number, would exercise the influence attached to wealth in a poor community. Their superior education and habits of command would add to their power. The wide diffusion of Aramaic would largely get over the difficulties of intercourse. On the other hand, the steady pressure of the life, social and religious, of the large community in the midst of which they were placed would tend to identification of interests. This was the more certain under the heathen ideas which confined the authority of particular deities to limited localities—*e.g.* the hills or the plains. Further, the colonists were not, to begin with, a united body. The first contingent was sent by Sargon (Schrader, *Keilinsch.* i. 268); a second two reigns later by Esar-haddon (Ezra iv. 2); and a third by his successor, 'the great and noble Asnapper' = Asshur-bani-pal (Ezra iv. 10). They would naturally be drawn from different parts of the empire, and were probably more widely separated from each other in language, custom, and religion than all of them were from the Israelites around them. The more easily, therefore, would the

successive companies fall under the influence of their more numerous neighbours. They may even have developed a warmer interest in local affairs than was shown by the Samaritans themselves. Thus the descendants of the earlier English colonists in Ireland are described as *Hibernis Hiberniores*. The Norman nobles in the days of King John claimed to be the spokesmen of the English people, but the relatively small infusion of Norman blood left the prevailingly Teutonic character of the people practically unaltered. So the coming of the Assyrian colonists did little to dilute the blood of the northern tribesmen. Their claim to belong to the chosen race is supported by the personal appearance of the surviving Samaritans to-day. Dr. Thomson says that as a community they are 'tall and fine looking.' 'Their features represent the finest type of Israelite.' This the present writer, from personal knowledge, is able to corroborate.

Dr. Thomson emphasizes the difficulty of transport in the days of Sargon from Palestine to the regions beyond the Tigris and the Euphrates. The population of north Palestine he calculates could not be less than 500,000. A horde of captives of that size passing through Coele-Syria to Carchemish, and thence down the Euphrates, would have laid the whole country bare, and would have emptied of provisions every store-city on the route. This would have interfered for years with the march of Assyrian armies. Sargon's son, Sennacherib, indeed claims to have deported over 200,000 from the captured towns and villages of Judah. But Sennacherib had a weakness for exaggeration. He boasts that among the treasures given him by Hezekiah were 800 talents of silver. We learn from 2 Kings xviii. 14 that the amount was 300 talents. If he exaggerates in the same proportion with regard

to the captives, his achievement is reduced to 75,000. With the larger numbers, no doubt the difficulties would increase in greater proportion, although they might not rise to the point of absolute impossibility. A crowd of more than half a million would raise a very different problem.

There are early indications of imperfect sympathies between the northern and the southern tribes, and of a certain rivalry between Ephraim and Judah. Their differences became acute and manifest on the death of Saul, when the kingdom was divided between Ishbosheth and David. After a temporary reconciliation, on occasion furnished by the oppression of Solomon and the folly of Rehoboam, the cleavage recurred and became permanent. Notwithstanding, they had reached this stage as substantially one people, in the course of a common history. The spell of Abraham's name lay on all their hearts; the Patriarchs were their honoured ancestors; Moses was the framer of their laws. Their patriotism was fired by the same traditions of heroic enterprise. Their religious life was nourished and guided by one faith, by an identical revelation of God's will, by prophetic voices which commanded the reverence of all. The inheritance of ritual in divine worship was shared by north and south alike. Whatever documents, historical or religious, existed, they were not the exclusive possession of either, although for safety, towards the end of the period, the majority of these may have been in the custody of the temple authorities. Until the days of Solomon no one spot was fixed as that in which the nation's worship could be acceptably offered, and the practice of sacrifice on the High Places prevailed (1 Sam. ix. 12, 13; 1 Kings iii. 2, 3, 4, etc.).

After the disruption the main differences, religiously,



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between Israel and Judah were the presence of the golden calves at Bethel and at Dan, and the absence of a central sanctuary in the north. The ancient ritual of the High Places was maintained in the north, and, on occasion at least, was followed even by distinguished prophets; *e.g.* Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 30 ff.). There is abundant evidence to show that in Judah, notwithstanding the presence of the temple, the High Places often glowed with the red fires of sacrifice. If in spite of this the worship of Jehovah continued in Judah, we might safely assume that it continued also in the north. There is, however, no lack of evidence. Take, for example, the names given to children, which, according to prevailing custom, indicated the deities they served. Jeroboam, leader of the revolting tribes, called his first-born Abijah=*Jehovah is my father*. Ahab's sons were Joash=*Whom Jehovah supports*; Ahaziah=*Whom Jehovah upholds*; and Jehoram=*Whom Jehovah exalts*. Ahab's servant is Obadiah=*Servant of Jehovah*. The instrument of vengeance on the house of Ahab is Jehu=*Jehovah is*, and his father's name is Jehoshaphat=*Jehovah judges*. Outstanding prophetic names are Elijah=*Jehovah is my God*; Zedekiah=*Jehovah is just*; and Micah=*Who is like Jehovah*? The fact that the great mass of names surviving from that time are 'Jehovistic' shows how widely Jehovah was held in honour in Israel, and even in the household of Ahab. This is the more remarkable when we remember the desperate attempt of Jezebel, with at least the connivance of Ahab, to subvert the worship of Jehovah. The princess of Tyre designed to exterminate the prophets of Jehovah. There must have been many. Obadiah alone was able to hide and provide sustenance for a hundred of them until the storm passed. No doubt multitudes

of the people bowed to the blast and, while unchanged in mind, offered no overt resistance to the royal will. But there were at least seven thousand whose faith and courage never failed, who were ready to brave the worst the 'tiger Jezebel' might do. Jezebel's attempt at subversion is itself, indeed, a proof that Jehovism was the acknowledged religion of the northern kingdom.

It is clear, therefore, that the northern tribes, while breaking away from the Davidic monarchy, carried with them their ancestral faith. The familiar ritual marked their worship, and even the fiercest denunciations of the High Places by the prophets do not deny that the homage there rendered was paid to Jehovah (Hos. iv. 15). What then was the reason for the hostility shown by the prophets to the High Places?

The origin of worship on the High Places is lost in the dimness of antiquity. When Israel entered Canaan, the nations whom they dispossessed, whatever local differences there might be in thought and ritual, were all worshippers of Baal; and the High Places were their immemorial sanctuaries. These were in conspicuous positions, often dominating town or village. Each was furnished with an altar, a *matztzebah*, or 'pillar,' an upright, unhewn stone which was the symbol of the divine presence; and an *Asherah* (translated 'grove' in our English version), which was properly a tree trunk set up in a socket of stone, as the symbol, or as the 'house' of the goddess of that name, whose worship was widely spread through Syria and Canaan. Recent investigations, particularly those of Professor Macalister at Gezer, have shed a lurid light upon the character of Canaanite worship. It was associated with the most revolting licence, and orgies of human sacrifice, with feasts upon the victims

following. There were at times secret caves under the sacred areas, where these horrible banquets were held, and oracular responses delivered.

Israel did not exterminate the Canaanites. Certain communities were by treaty left intact. Many cities defied capture. Others, such as Jerusalem, taken at first, reverted for a time at least to their heathen inhabitants. The Israelites were therefore in daily contact with people living in their midst for whom this ghastly ritual possessed all the glamour of immemorial custom. Under the influence of the conquerors the worst features would tend to disappear, but as the altars, the pillars, and *Asherahs* were not destroyed, their existence must have been a perpetual invitation to return to the debaucheries of other days.

Baal might be the name of any one of many local deities, each with his own shrine and circle of devotees ; or it might designate the supreme god, the rival of Jehovah. In this latter significance undoubtedly it is used by Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings xviii. 21) ; and also by Jehu in Samaria (2 Kings x. 18 ff.). In the former case Baal, followed by a place-name, means ' Lord of ' or ' Possessor of. ' Thus, Baal-Gad = *Lord of Gad* ' (Joshua xiii. 5) ; Baal-Hazor = *Lord of Hazor* (2 Sam. xiii. 23). These Baals thus localized tended to fall apart, and to be conceived as separate deities. The process resembled that by which in Roman Catholic countries the Virgin of one shrine came to be regarded by the peasantry as a different personality, endowed with different attributes, from Our Lady of another. It was inevitable that the relation of these district ' Lords ' to the supreme Baal should become obscured. With the suppression of the more repulsive parts of the old ritual, the worship of Canaanite and Hebrew would tend to approximate.

They offered in sacrifice the same victims—oxen, sheep, goats. The annual round of feasts, suited to the progress of the seasons, would be easily synchronized. The Israelites repudiated the supreme heathen Baal, and acknowledged Jehovah as the giver of all good ; as ‘ Lord ’ of the district, and also of the whole land. It would not be strange if they came to see in the deities revered on the High Places, local reflections, or representatives of the High God, Jehovah, and to speak of Him under the familiar name of Baal, ‘ Lord.’ That they did so is proved by the prevalence of such names as Bealiah=*Jehovah is Baal* (1 Chron. xii. 5) ; Eshbaal=*Man of Baal*, son of Saul (1 Chron. viii. 33) ; and Beeliada=*Whom Baal knows*, David’s son (1 Chron. xiv. 7). This same name appears in 2 Sam. v. 16 as Eliada=*Whom God knows*. Later this custom fell into disrepute (Hos. ii. 16).

That the High Places survived so many attempts at their destruction in both Israel and Judah was doubtless due to the fact that the worship there was offered to Jehovah. But plainly the position was one of peril. The associations of the old heathen worship lingered around them. To these influences the Canaanite element in the population would be especially responsive, and the Israelites found it all too easy to slip down into the alluring idolatries of ancient days. The complete destruction of the High Places and their furniture would have meant deliverance of the people from a great and pressing danger. But whilst this is the burden of much prophesying, we must note that it is a prophetic pen that writes, ‘ The High Places were not removed ; nevertheless Asa’s heart was perfect with the Lord all his days.’ That he suffered the continuance of worship at these hoary

shrines was but a slight derogation from the eulogy paid to him.

In setting up the golden calves at Bethel and at Dan Jeroboam's object was political. To preserve continuity in religious observances as far as was compatible with that object was obviously good policy. All existing evidence as to the ritual of worship followed at the High Places in the north points to its similarity to that practised in the south. But the evidence goes beyond this, leading to the conclusion that these observances were not merely traditional, but—a matter of much higher importance—were carried out in accordance with a written, authoritative code.

From the story of Elijah on Mount Carmel we learn that the altars were built of unhewn stone, conforming to the regulations in *Exod. xx. 25*. The victim, a bullock, and the sacrifice, a whole burnt offering, follow the prescriptions of the Levitical law (*Lev. i. 3, 5 ff.*). The deed was done at the hour of the evening sacrifice. The use of this phrase as a note of time shows that the evening sacrifice was an established custom in Israel (*cf. Ezra ix. 4*). From Amos, who prophesied in the days of Jeroboam II., we hear that sacrifices were offered every morning (*Amos iv. 4*). As from Mount Zion, therefore, so from the northern shrines, morning and evening the smoke of sacrifice floated upward. Tithes were also exacted in Israel, and no doubt furnished the means to maintain the sanctuaries at Bethel, Dan, Gilgal, Beersheba (*Amos iv. 4; v. 5*). Amos complains that they offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving 'with leaven,' thus breaking the regulation of *Lev. ii. 11*, 'Ye shall burn no leaven.' He further condemns the proclamation and publishing of freewill offerings.

Let it be observed that Amos is neither a priest, a prophet, nor the son of a prophet. He has no connection with the priesthood or with the schools of the prophets. He is a plain man moved by the Spirit of God to rebuke the evils of his time. But he makes no mistake in his use of highly technical terms relating to the conduct of divine worship. Such terms are: *tōdah*, 'thank-offering'; *qattēr*, 'to burn (incense)'; *nedabōth*, 'freewill offerings'; *haggēchem*, 'your feast days'; '*atzerothēchem*, 'your solemn assemblies'; '*olōth*, 'burnt offerings'; *minḥothēchem*, 'your meat offerings.' These all occur in the Priestly Code (P), *minḥah* appearing in it alone. And it is important to observe that Amos takes it for granted that they are as familiar to his auditors, the worshipping people of north Israel, as they are to himself. The people are rebuked for breaches of ritual order in terms which imply that they knew and professed to follow the Priestly Code. In passing, we may draw attention to the fact that here we have a practical demonstration of the early existence of the Priestly Code, which the critics tell us first saw the light in the days of Ezra.

The altar of incense at Jerusalem has its counterpart at Bethel (1 Kings xiii. 1). The law of the Nazarite, given in Num. vi. 1-21, was observed in early Israel (Judges xiii. 14; xvi. 17), and the religious order existed alike in the north (Amos ii. 11, 12), and in Judah (Lam. iv. 7).

The absence of a central shrine in the north was, indeed, a serious difference. Perhaps some attempt to put Bethel in the place of Zion may be referred to in Amaziah's declaration that it was the royal sanctuary—King's Chapel (Amos vii. 13; cf. 1 Kings xii. 29 ff.). It was shorn of its glory when Samaria fell, and an old tradition says that Shalmaneser secured for himself

the golden calf. The priest who came from Assyria to teach the colonists resided here (2 Kings xvii. 28). The shrine was finally destroyed by King Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 4, 15).

We must not too readily assume the entire success of Jeroboam's purpose in setting up the golden calves (1 Kings xii. 26). All the tribesmen had come for a time under the spell of Zion. The attractions of the Holy Mountain may have been strong enough to brave the anger of the king, and the feet of many worshippers may have trodden the pathway to Jerusalem. Otherwise it is difficult to understand the measures taken by Baasha (1 Kings xv. 17; cf. 2 Chron. xv. 9 ff.). In Jehoshaphat's day people from Mount Ephraim were brought back to the God of their fathers (2 Chron. xix. 4). Even during the period of Israel's greatest prosperity under Jeroboam II., Hosea regards Zion as the sole seat of legitimate worship (Hos. iv. 15; x. 11; xi. 12), and the house of David as the legitimate rulers (Hos. iii. 5). There is, indeed, no statement that such prophets as Elijah and Elisha ever visited the temple at Jerusalem. But the argument from silence is always precarious. If it was their custom periodically to worship there, this is just one of the things that might easily escape mention in such records as we possess—things of which common knowledge is assumed. For example, the article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* on William Wilberforce of anti-slavery fame never mentions that he attended church. The high honour paid to Elijah by the Jews, and the attitude taken by Elisha towards Jehoshaphat of Judah as against Jehoram of Israel (2 Kings iii. 14), hardly consist with their ignoring of Solomon's splendid shrine.

But the worship of the calves was straight in the

teeth of the Mosaic law. It was not, indeed, the worship of Baal. Jehu had 'destroyed Baal out of Israel,' but he 'departed not from after . . . the golden calves that were in Bethel and that were in Dan' (2 Kings x. 28 f.). Even so, how can this be reconciled with the prevailing worship of Jehovah? Confessedly the answer is not easy. Our information is very limited. But the same question may be asked regarding the worship of images by Roman Catholics, while the commandment forbidding it is blazoned on the walls before their eyes. The Romanist distinguishes between two kinds of worship, a lower and a higher: the former he offers to images; the latter is reserved for God alone. This suggests a possible solution of our problem. Under different names, and with various functions, we read of angels in the Old Testament. They are created beings (Ps. cxlviii. 2, 5), of older date than the earth (Job xxxviii. 7). In the New Testament also they play a considerable part, and have a place in the teaching of Jesus (Matt. xxii. 30; xxvi. 53; Mark viii. 38; Luke xvi. 22, etc.). According to Stephen (Acts vii. 53), Paul (Gal. iii. 19), and the writer to the Hebrews (ii. 2), the law was not given directly by God to men, but through the intermediation of angels. They are a higher order of beings standing between God and man, entrusted by God with special tasks on behalf of men. It would not be surprising if a certain reverence were paid to them. They are spoken of at times as *elohîm* (Ps. viii. 5, etc.), a name, plural in form, which is applied also to God. In the act of consecrating the calves Jeroboam exclaimed: 'Behold thy *elohîm*, O Israel' (1 Kings xii. 28). May not his meaning have been, 'Behold thy angels, O Israel—intermediaries of God—who brought thee out of the land of Egypt'? Note the

correspondence between the action and language of Jeroboam and those of Aaron in the wilderness. Aaron's calf may have suggested the form of Jeroboam's idols, and the significance may in each case have been the same. Here perhaps we have the explanation of the comparatively mild denunciation of this particular idolatry by the prophets. They do not, as we should expect, demand the destruction of the calves. It was, however, a dangerous innovation, even if a lower form of worship was offered to the calves. It was a first step towards polytheism; but the movement went no farther.

The priest brought back from Assyria would naturally teach the colonists the ritual which had long been familiar to Israel. He resided at Bethel, evidently the chief of the High Places with which that ritual was associated. The northern tribes shared in the reformatations carried out by Hezekiah and Josiah. During the captivity of Judah the gulf between the tribesmen of the north and those of the south gradually narrowed. When Zerubbabel arrived in Jerusalem he found Jews and Samaritans living together on terms of such intimacy that intermarriage was common. This would have been impossible had serious questions of religion been in dispute. The offer of help by the Samaritans in rebuilding the temple implied acknowledgment of its superior sanctity; and they claimed that they had been worshippers of Jehovah for some two hundred years. Their claim was not denied. And it is to be noted that their offer of assistance was not rejected on religious grounds. To the Jews themselves had the work of rebuilding been entrusted, and they were determined to carry out King Cyrus's command to the very letter. The hot resentment roused by this incident had time to cool in succeeding years.

North and south resumed their old friendly relationships. But the coming of Ezra and Nehemiah was followed by a rupture all the more inveterate because now religion was involved. And here it is appropriate to observe that only when the schism took on a religious character did the Samaritans give themselves with resolution and success to the founding of a rival central shrine in the north.

There were no doubt many abuses calling for reform, and clearly Ezra and Nehemiah put all their hearts into the business. Their measures of correction were carried out with ruthless severity. They professed to act upon ancient statutes prohibiting the Ammonite and the Moabite from ever entering the congregation of God, and forbidding intermarriage with the heathen peoples whom Israel had conquered. Two cases illustrate their methods: (1) Eliashib the High Priest had conceded the claim of Tobiah the Ammonite to be an Israelite, with a right to worship at the central shrine, and had allotted to him a chamber in the sanctuary. It is extremely unlikely that a man with a name meaning 'Jehovah is good' would be in fact an Ammonite. This may have been a nickname. Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, in the end of the fifteenth century, had no drop of Moorish blood in his veins; but on account of his dark complexion he was known as 'Il Moro,' The Moor. The High Priest himself was a relative of Tobiah. This man, thrown out of the sacred precincts with every circumstance of ignominy, allied himself with the Samaritans—if indeed he was not a Samaritan to begin with—and proved one of the Jews' most active and bitter foes. (2) Another relative of the High Priest, his grandson, had married a Samaritan wife, the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite. As a native of Beth-horon the

latter was probably of Israelite descent. Sanballat may have been the name given him as an official under the Assyrians; just as Zerubbabel was called Sheshbazzar. 'I chased him from me,' is the graphic phrase in which Nehemiah describes his treatment of the offender—an act that seems to have had far-reaching, disastrous results.

The interpretation of the law here acted upon is justified by no extant Scripture. Even if Tobiah belonged to the hated people, the prohibition against the Ammonites and Moabites was limited to ten generations (Deut. xxiii. 3), and these were long past. No common ingenuity would be required to make the law forbidding marriage with the heathen Canaanites (Exod. xxxiv. 12, 15 f.) apply to the Samaritans. The zeal of Ezra and Nehemiah in this matter possibly reveals something of the narrow, legalistic spirit that afterwards hardened into Pharisaism. By their instrumentality two peoples boasting common ancestry and traditions, who even in political separation had worshipped the one God, following the same ritual, were thrust apart, and sent down the centuries perhaps the most perfect example of mutual hostility and hatred the world has ever seen.

From the foregoing it is manifest that up to the end of the Exile Jews and Samaritans were in agreement as to both sacred books and ritual practice. The rupture that then occurred would make little or no difference in this respect, as both were alike desirous of maintaining continuity with the past. The worship in the temple which as a result of the schism was set up on Mount Gerizim would therefore be as exact a copy as possible of that in the Jerusalem temple. If confirmation of this be required, it is furnished in the

Aramaic manuscripts found at Assouan in Upper Egypt. These date from 471 B.C. to 411 B.C. Here is recorded an appeal made by the Jewish community at Elephantine to 'The Sons of Sanballat' in Samaria in terms that acknowledge them as fellow-religionists no less than the High Priest in Jerusalem himself—a thing that would have been impossible had any important differences then existed. According to Josephus (*Antiquities*, xi. vii. 2 ; viii. 2 ff.), Sanballat built the temple on Gerizim for Manasseh his son-in-law who had been chased out of the southern sanctuary. (Josephus here unaccountably drops a whole century of history, confused, perhaps, among the kings who bore the names of Darius and Artaxerxes. He makes Alexander the Great grant permission to build the temple, a permission probably given by Darius Nothus.) If, as Josephus says, many Jews who were in like case with Manasseh 'revolted' to him, and were provided with houses and land by Sanballat, there was an added reason why the ritual in the rival shrine should be identical with that on Zion. From that time forward there was complete separation of Jew and Samaritan. Religious movements in Jerusalem would be suspect on Gerizim ; and the last thing the men of the north would dream of doing would be to adopt developments approved by their hated rivals in the south.

It appears, therefore, that at the time of the final rupture the Samaritans possessed a copy of the Pentateuch, with many minor differences which have an importance of their own, but yet agreeing in all essentials with that preserved by the Jews from which our own translation was made. When and how did that copy pass into their hands? The Samaritans claim that it has been in their keeping for over three

thousand years. The advanced Critical view is that the Samaritans had regarded, if not with explicit approval, yet without protest, the process of revolutionary change which was brought to a conclusion by Ezra : and the theory most in favour is that the High Priest's grandson, chased from the temple by Nehemiah, secured and carried with him to Samaria a copy of the newly completed Pentateuch.

This brings us face to face with an insuperable difficulty. According to the Critics the book of Joshua is linked up with the five books of Moses as an outcome of the same literary activity. Their clear-eyed analysis refers the component parts to the same sources—J, E, D, and P. This literary unity consists therefore of six books, not five—a Hexateuch, not a Pentateuch. If this is true, then will some one tell us why the renegade priest took with him only five of the sacred books ; and, above all, why he rejected that one which would have made special appeal to the patriotism and pride of the northern tribes ? For Joshua was their most heroic figure, round whose memory were entwined inspiring traditions, whose ashes reposed in their midst. In the situation that had arisen this book would have met with an enthusiastic reception among the Samaritans. There was every reason why it should be taken ; none why it should be rejected. Jewish teachers have always maintained that the book of Joshua and the Pentateuch are entirely distinct and separate. But strangely, with the Critics, the weight of Jewish opinion seems to depend upon the scale into which it is cast. The Jewish Rabbin of the third or fourth century excluded the book of Daniel from the ' Prophets,' and placed it among the ' Kethubhîm,' the sacred writings. This agrees with the Critical view.

It is accepted as a palmary argument against the authenticity and historicity of the book. The far earlier decision of the Jewish teachers with regard to Joshua is against the Critics. It is therefore rejected as worthless. If the Jewish view were accepted it would get over the difficulty we are dealing with—and destroy the Critical theory.

But this is only the beginning of trouble for the Higher Critics. Further obstacles are raised by their account of the composition of the Torah—the Hebrew name for the Pentateuch. A brief, clear statement of the essential features of that account—its articulated skeleton—will aid us in our study.

About the time of Jehoshaphat, say the Critics, one whose name has perished, in the southern kingdom, began to collect and put in writing the legends connected with the origin of the Israelite race. Some hundred years later a writer in the north took up a similar pious task. The Judean spoke of God by His covenant name, Jehovah: the Ephraimite used the more general term, Elohim. For convenience the two resulting documents are distinguished by the initials of these names, the Judean being known as J (Jehovist), and the Ephraimite as E (Elohist). In the reign of Josiah an editor, or redactor, took these two narratives and wove them into one. This combination is known as JE. About the same time, by order of the king, repairs on a large scale were carried out in the temple. The need was serious. The employment of hewn stone shows that the masonry in parts was giving way. During the progress of the work Hilkiah, the High Priest, came upon a document which he described as 'The Book of the Law.' He gave the book to the scribe Shaphan, who passed it on to the king. This document, the Critics declare, was the book of Deutero-

nomy, and it is referred to as D. They maintain that it was the work of certain members of the prophetic school. The object aimed at was the total destruction of the High Places, and the concentration of the national worship in the central shrine in Jerusalem. It was sought to ensure success by invoking the authority of the great law-giver of Israel: so the writing was attributed to Moses himself. With the assistance, or at least with the connivance, of the High Priest, the book thus prepared was concealed in the temple. Those who hide know where to seek. According to the arrangement Hilki'ah 'discovered' the document, and by its means the end desired was attained. Somewhat later a redactor combined D with JE, expanding and adjusting the narratives in the latter to D. Other redactors followed who, imbued with the spirit of Deuteronomy, operated on the other books of Scripture. These are known as D₂ and D₃, and to them is attributed the insertion, or interpolation, of passages which do not fit into the Critical theory.

During the Exile the prophet-priest, Ezekiel, and others like-minded with him, passionately desiring to keep Israel pure and separate from the heathen, produced what is known as the Law of Holiness (H). Herein is embodied, with variations, the list of clean and unclean animals found in Deuteronomy, while large space is given to matters concerning marriage relationships. An elaborate system of washings and sacrifices was added by the captive priests, and all together constituted what is called the Priestly Code (P). The document combining J and E with D found its way from Palestine to the land of Exile. Whether before leaving Jerusalem or after its arrival in Babylon, later Jehovist, and probably also later

Elohist, hands had laid their mark upon it. Contributions had thus been made by writers indicated as J, J₂, J₃, E, E₂, E₃, D, D₂, D₃, P, P₂, P₃, and perhaps others. The material thus collected was wrought into the completed Torah, and brought to Jerusalem by Ezra. We have therefore the claim made that the Pentateuch, practically in the form in which the Samaritans possess it, made its first appearance in Palestine with Ezra. If this is true, then clearly the Samaritans could not have had the Torah before the days of that famous scribe.

In examining this theory it will be convenient to begin with Deuteronomy which, the Critics allege, was the book 'found' in the temple, coming for the first time to light as a pious fraud. The only proof offered in support of this startling assertion is the Critics' own averment that (a) Deuteronomy confines the offering of legitimate sacrifices to Jerusalem, and (b) that Josiah alone, after having read this book, carried this legislation into effect. Unfortunately for the theory, neither statement is true. So far from absolutely limiting acceptable sacrifice to Jerusalem, explicit instructions are given as to the offering of sacrifice elsewhere, under certain conditions. Note the directions laid down for the conduct of sacrificial worship by those who live 'too far' from the central shrine (Deut. xii. 21). It is a sacrificial killing and eating that is referred to here; otherwise, distance from the sanctuary would be unimportant. Again, assuming that altars will be set up by different communities, the erection of *matztzeboth* and *ashereth* is prohibited (Deut. xvi. 21 f.). The temple and its altars were already old when the book of the law was found. It would be grotesque to imagine that Hilkiah and his friends thought it possible that *asherah* or



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matztzebah would be introduced into the sanctuary on Zion. Clearly this regulation contemplated a multiplicity of altars (cf. Exod. xx. 24, 25). Now *what the law regulates it allows*. Further, at Elephantine, in the days of the later Persian monarchs, the community was largely Jewish. They built a local temple in which they worshipped Jehovah according to the law of Moses. As Jews the supremacy of the temple at Jerusalem would specially appeal to them; but they betray no trace of feeling that the existence of their shrine in any degree derogates from the honour of that on Zion. The like is true regarding the temple built by Onias at Leontopolis in the time of the Ptolemies.

As to the statement that Josiah was the first to give effect to this legislation, it is sufficient to point to 2 Kings xviii. 4 and to Isa. xxxvi. 7. Two generations before Josiah was born, King Hezekiah had bent his strength to exactly the same reforms. Such an episode was too arresting to have been forgotten in Josiah's day. The destruction of the brasen serpent itself would make that reformation memorable. It would require something more than a hard-pressed Critic's mere *ipsedixit* to brand the account of Hezekiah's work as an interpolation by a Deuteronomist.

If the Critical theory of the origin of Deuteronomy is correct, it is a striking fact that the book is singularly poor in regulations for ritual, the very thing we should have expected to find in liberal measure, when a multitude of local sanctuaries, with presumably varying, not to say corrupted, worship were to be abolished. Again, if the book were introduced for the specific purpose of centralizing the worship at the temple in Jerusalem, it is at least remarkable that Zion is not once named or even referred to. Why did

the writer fail to indicate decisively the one legitimate, national shrine? The Samaritan interpolator had no hesitation in naming Mount Gerizim. One is bound to say also that it was very unlike a Jerusalem Jew to give such prominence to the Samaritan mountains as they receive in chapters xi. 29; xxvii. 4. The truth is that everything known with certainty points to the book having been written before the final choice of a site for the central shrine (cf. Deut. xii. 5; xv. 20; xviii. 6, etc.). If the building of the temple on Mount Zion was the fulfilment of God's purpose, this would indicate the existence of Deuteronomy before the days of David and Solomon.

Once more, according to the Critical hypothesis, Deuteronomy was the earliest book of ritual law. In JE there is little legislation, and that is not ritual. Until the appearance of Deuteronomy, therefore, no book of the law written by Moses was known either in Jerusalem or Samaria. No such book was in existence. But let it be observed that the 'discoverer' of this document says: 'I have found *the* book of the law.' If language has any meaning, in thus defining and individualizing the roll the speaker assumes that it is one the existence of which is a matter of common knowledge. Even so, it does not follow that Deuteronomy was the earliest book of ritual law. That it was later than J and E is evident from references to events recorded in Exodus and Numbers which involve these documents. But this is granted. P, however, is also quoted (Deut. x. 6, 7), an extract being taken from Num. xxxiii. 32 ff. There is an obvious reference to the Levitical law concerning leprosy in Deut. xxiv. 8, 9; cf. Lev. xiii.-xiv. Familiar knowledge of its teaching is assumed. Again, in Deut. xvi. 13 ff. observance of the Feast of Tabernacles is enjoined, but as to how

it is to be observed Deuteronomy has not a word to say. The reason for this silence is easy to see. Full directions for the due celebration of the Feast were already in the people's hands (Lev. xxiii. 33 ff.). There was no need to repeat them. From all this it follows that the Priestly Code was earlier than Deuteronomy. The Critical view that it was added some hundred and fifty years later is therefore untenable.

It would appear then that the roll called by Hilkiah '*the book of the law*' was a copy of the Torah—not merely of Deuteronomy—and that some special importance or sanctity attached to it. Is there any clue to its possible identity? The famous Egyptologist, Dr. Edouard Naville, has made a suggestion of great interest. Solomon, who married a daughter of the Pharaoh, must have had some acquaintance with Egyptian ways. A custom prevailed in the Nile Valley, when temples were being built, of putting portions of the sacred book, the Book of the Dead, in the foundations of these sacred edifices. If this custom appealed to Solomon, what more natural than that he should place a copy of the Hebrew sacred book, the Torah, in the foundation of the temple? We have seen that with the lapse of centuries parts of the masonry were giving way, and in the course of the repairs ordered by Josiah the mouldering stones were replaced by fresh hewn blocks. If the stone containing the book were of the softer order of limestone its decay might be endangering the stability of the structure. On its removal the contents of its receptacle would be revealed. It will be observed that Hilkiah does not go directly to the king with the roll, as the High Priest might be expected to do. The reason may be that the script in which it was written had, with the lapse of centuries, become archaic, and

for its decipherment the skill of an expert was required. It was therefore handed to the learned professional scribe, Shaphan, who took it to Josiah. He could clear up obscurities for the king. We can well imagine the impression made upon the royal mind and on that of his subjects by this hoary document so strangely brought to light. But this again would mean that at the very beginning of the monarchy in Israel the Torah was already sacrosanct.

Let it be granted, however, for sake of argument, that the Critical hypothesis is correct. Consider then the happenings on Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem. Nearly a hundred years before, Zerubbabel had built an altar 'to offer burnt offerings thereon'—it is significantly added, 'as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God' (Ezra iii. 2 f.). Almost three-quarters of a century had passed since the temple was rebuilt and a regular service of worship organized—sufficiently long for the ritual followed to have established its hold upon the minds of priests and people alike. All history testifies to the intense repugnance of the Jews to changes affecting even small points in their religious ritual. What must the attitude of these men have been towards this stranger from Babylon, who brought a book to them hitherto unknown, which he claimed to be the complete law of Moses; which contained many new things, in particular the Priestly Code, which called for a revolution of their religious practices? Can we believe that, being the men they were, they would meekly abandon a ritual hallowed for them by the experience of more than two generations, and adopt wholesale innovations at the bidding of one who, although belonging to a priestly family, had never himself even seen a legitimate sacrifice? The support of the Tirshatha, backed up by the Great

King, would not have eased Ezra's difficulties; for with men of the Jewish type a display of force is apt to rouse only more resolute opposition.

Now the impression made by the narrative is that Ezra encountered but little difficulty in securing the acceptance of the Torah. The only suggestion of trouble is with the men who, on his interpretation of the law, had sinned in marrying alien wives. But even the success of his relentless treatment of them cannot be easily explained if the law he so interpreted and applied was new, or of hitherto unacknowledged authority. If, on the other hand, we may assume that the antiquity and authority of the Torah were unquestioned, but that, through the vicissitudes of a long and troubled history, many of its provisions had fallen into desuetude: if we may further suppose that Ezra's appeal quickened the conscience of officials and community alike, who in their hearts were not unaware of their declension, the way would be clear to a reasonable understanding of what took place.

It seems worth while to say that if Ezra had really filled the rôle assigned to him by the Critics, few Hebrew names would have been held in more conspicuous honour than his. The Jews have never been ungenerous in celebrating the achievements of their illustrious sons. But the glory given to Ezra by the Critics far exceeds that accorded to him by his own people. In Ben Sira's *Hymn of the Fathers*, for example, such men as Zerubbabel, Joshua the High Priest, and Nehemiah are commemorated, while Ezra is not deemed worthy of mention.

But the difficulties in the way of the Critical theory are not exhausted. We are asked to believe that the scruples of the Jews were got over, and the new Torah accepted in Jerusalem; that under its provisions the

grandson of the High Priest was convicted of infamy, and with contempt and shame was 'chased' from the sacred precincts; that this man, whom Josephus calls Manasseh, smarting under the disgrace, possessed himself forthwith of a copy of the Torah, carried it to Samaria, and commended to his kindred for their adoption and obedience the very law under which he had suffered such unforgettable humiliation and opprobrium. The demand strains even credulity to the breaking point. We could as easily conceive a Puritan, a victim of Archbishop Laud's fiery zeal, having escaped to the freedom of New England, at once becoming an enthusiastic advocate of the whole Laudian system.

Even if we suppose this difficulty surmounted, and Manasseh willing to undertake this singular task, we have still to ask how the Samaritan priests and people would regard the astonishing proposal. They followed a sacrificial ritual learned from accredited teachers, which had mingled for centuries with all their experience of life. The stout religious conservatism of the Orient found a congenial home in the breasts of the Jews and the Samaritans. The old friendly relations between Samaria and Jerusalem had given place to bitter hostility. It is not very easy to believe that the Samaritans gave up a ritual received from their fathers and endeared by familiar use, to accept a new Torah issuing from the hated south, on the invitation of a priest who was himself a fugitive from its provisions, having suffered under them disgrace and degradation. The fact that the Levitical legislation was given effect to in the temple on Gerizim is indeed itself a proof that the Priestly Code was known and revered by the Samaritans long before the days of Ezra.

So far, the question how the Samaritans became possessed of the Pentateuch has not been answered. It is surely abundantly clear that the Critical theory is impossible. Is there any better suggestion to offer? We have seen that it is not unreasonable to believe that the complete Torah was extant in the days of Solomon. After the disruption of the kingdom one copy would probably be the parent of those that were in the hands of the northern tribes. When Samaria fell and priests and leading men were carried away, the Assyrians would make a clean sweep of the sacred literature of the Hebrews. To the poor and ignorant who remained, the books would have been useless. Unable to read, their guides would be memory and tradition. In accordance with old-world custom, the Assyrian colonists desired to pay homage to the God in whose land they had settled. The exact ritual to be followed was reckoned of supreme importance. The right attitudes and gestures of the worshippers, the correct titles by which to address the Deity, the proper terms of dedication, couched probably in archaic language, these were things the knowledge of which was essential to acceptable worship. They were of too great consequence to be learned with confidence from the lips of an ignorant peasantry. Appeal for guidance was made to the Assyrian king, for whom, as for his people, the whole idea of religion was ritual. We know that the Sargonid monarchs were keenly interested in, and formed collections of, this kind of literature. Would such a king, answering the appeal, think it sufficient to send a priest who should rely entirely upon his memory in teaching ritual—a matter in which even the slightest error might vitiate a whole service? Assuredly he would consider the priest's equipment incomplete without a book to guide him

and prevent mistakes. Such a book as he required was at hand among those carried to Assyria, possibly in the hands of the priests themselves. Armed with a copy of the Torah, the success of the priest's mission was well assured. It is easy to understand the reverence with which the Samaritans would regard a book with such a history thus coming into their hands ; with what jealous care they would preserve it ; and how with passing time the sense of sanctity would grow around it. This would fully account for the profound honour in which the Samaritans hold the Pentateuch to-day.

But more than that, it would explain why the Pentateuch alone of all the sacred writings of Israel is possessed by the Samaritans. From the conqueror's point of view the Torah was a comparatively harmless book which, if sent to Samaria, might serve a useful end. It was far otherwise with the historical books, and especially with Joshua. The story of the great Ephraimite hero and his stirring exploits, of the imperial glories of the days of David and Solomon, could only work mischief among the Hebrew tribesmen, nourishing a spirit of patriotism, rousing national feeling, and preparing the way for revolt. The Assyrians would take good care that none of these rolls should reach Samaria. These historical books are all of prophetic origin. When we remember the hostility prevailing between priests and prophets in the north, it is highly improbable that the teacher-priest at Bethel, while perhaps not ignorant of these books himself, would be at any pains to spread a knowledge of them among the Samaritans.

The Samaritans do indeed betray a certain consciousness that their canon is incomplete as a basis on which to rest their claim to be the true Israel. It is clear

that the history of God's chosen people could not have ended on the eastern shore of the Jordan. That is where the Pentateuch leaves them. The Samaritans seem once to have had an authoritative account of the conquest of Palestine, and the place they assign to Joshua is second only to that of Moses. Unfortunately the havoc wrought by the Assyrians was but the beginning of a long series of disasters to Israelite literature, and from the days of Hyrcanus Samaritan manuscripts have frequently suffered wholesale destruction. The outcome of efforts made to supply the resulting lack of historic documents as seen in the books known as *Tolidah*, the Samaritan *Joshua*, and the *Annals* of Abu'l Fath, can only be described as pathetic.

If, then, the priest from Assyria brought with him a copy of the Torah, we must conclude that this was the law in force in the northern kingdom before the fall of Samaria. When did it come there? We have seen that the Mosaic ritual was known and followed in Israel in the days of Jeroboam II. But that great warrior, who did evil in the sight of the Lord, certainly did not bring it in. Nor can we associate with this any prince of the house of Omri. Jeroboam with his calves may also be dismissed from our minds. The Torah must therefore have been in the possession of Israel before the disruption of the kingdom. Thus, by another line of reasoning, we are brought back to the times, and to the house of David. In their eagerness to erect a permanent central shrine as the sacred hearth of the nation, they were clearly influenced by one of the ruling ideas of the Deuteronomic legislation. The ritual at the dedication closely followed the Priestly Code, even distinguishing between priests and Levites. And Solomon carried all Israel with him

in the solemn service. The law that swayed these splendid monarchs and their people was not a thing of yesterday. It spoke already with the authority of age. If Solomon wished to place a sacred volume in the foundation of the temple, it was there at hand.

The conclusion forced upon us in our study thus far is seen to be practically inevitable as we follow another line of investigation.

The three great texts, the Septuagint—the Greek translation of the Old Testament, said to have been made in Alexandria in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.), and often quoted in the New Testament—the Massoretic, and the Samaritan, are all derived ultimately from one original. Their mutual variations and agreements are deeply interesting, casting light upon their history, the influences to which they have been subjected, and also upon the question of their relative priority in date. Here, however, we are not concerned to learn which is the oldest. We are in search of evidence as to the age of the parent manuscript. For this purpose we may concentrate attention mainly upon the Massoretic and the Samaritan. Our object will be gained if we can determine approximately the date when the divergence from the parent manuscript took place, giving rise to the manuscripts from which these are descended. The required evidence is to be found in a study of the differences between the Massoretic and Samaritan texts, and in the discovery of the causes of these differences. After a careful scrutiny of the variants Dr. Thomson classifies them as due (1) to accident, and (2) to intention. Accidental variants may arise from mistakes (*a*) of hearing or (*b*) of sight, or from (*c*) defective attention. Intentional variants may be corrections

(a) grammatical, (b) logical, or (c) theological. Each of these sources of variants is important, and Dr. Thomson, with characteristic thoroughness, explores them all. For our present purpose, however, it will be enough to consider the variants arising from mistakes of sight, *i.e.* errors made by readers who have confused one letter with another which in the script before them was like it in shape.

The results achieved in recent decades in the field of Semitic epigraphy have made available a great body of inscriptions covering a period of more than a thousand years. The dates of the various Semitic scripts can thus be dated with approximate accuracy. The oldest form of Hebrew writing, the angular script, exists to-day only in inscriptions. Through a period of some five hundred years we can follow the changes by gradual modifications in this script, from the Moabite Stone, inscribed in the days of Jehoram, son of Ahab; the Baal Lebanon and Siloam inscriptions; down to the sarcophagus of Ashmunazar, a contemporary of the younger Cyrus, at Sidon. The angular script was succeeded by the Samaritan, examples of which are first found on the coins of Simon the Maccabee, about 140 B.C. Then some three hundred and sixty years later appears the familiar square character in which our Hebrew Bibles are printed. It is true, of course, that no manuscript has been found written in the old angular script, but it would be unsafe to infer that no such manuscript ever existed, or that such a document may not one day be discovered. Changes in the form of the incised letters in the inscriptions are evidently due to the influence of writing, say with a reed pen on papyrus. However, any doubt as to the practice of writing in the ancient script is dispelled by the discovery made by American explorers in the

foundation of Ahab's palace at Samaria, of *ostraka*—bits of broken earthenware jars—with inscriptions *written* in the ancient character.

If the water from, say, the Mississippi River near the sea were analysed, it would be found to contain traces of all the different soils through which it has passed in the course of its long journey. In like manner, a manuscript of the Old Testament, written in the latest script, may contain marks of every transmission, and of every script in which it has been copied and handed down from generation to generation. In such a manuscript there may be errors due to confusion of letters that are like each other in a recent script, and alongside of these may stand mistakes arising from similarity of character in an ancient script. Manifestly the individual document cannot be older than the most recent script it contains, but the age of the contents is determined by the oldest.

For this investigation it is obvious how important it is that the forms of the letters should be correctly copied from the Samaritan manuscripts. In printed works Dr. Thomson found much evidence of carelessness in this respect, the Germans, from Gesenius to Petermann, being the worst offenders. He gives, therefore (p. 222), a careful transcription of the various Semitic alphabets.

Take first the letters *daleth* ד and *resh* ר. These two closely resemble each other in the square character. In the Samaritan character they are not so much alike, 𐤄 and 𐤌 respectively. But in the Ashmunazar inscription and in that of Baal Lebanon 𐤄 and 𐤌, Δ and Δ respectively, they could easily be mistaken. Now in Gen. x. 4 the Massoretic reads a certain name *Dodanim*; the Samaritan reads *Rodanim*. Here the Septuagint supports the Samaritan, and in 1 Chron. i. 7

the name appears as in the Samaritan. The Samaritan copyist has evidently avoided a mistake into which the Massoretic has fallen. But in what script was the manuscript written from which the copies were made? As we have seen, it could not have been the Samaritan. We must go back to the old angular script for the source of this error. This points to the high antiquity of the contents of this book. A similar variant in which the Samaritan seems to be right is found in Gen. xlvii. 21. The Massoretic reads 'he removed them'—*i.e.* the Israelites—'to the cities,' etc. The Samaritan reads 'he enslaved them.' There are indeed two variants in the one phrase. The Massoretic takes *resh* for *daleth* in the first, and also in the third word, and there is the further difference in the third word that either the Massoretic has dropped a *beth* after the second letter, or the Samaritan has inserted one. In favour of the Samaritan we may point out that it carries on naturally the process narrated in the preceding verses. The Egyptians had successively sold their cattle and their lands to Pharaoh. The next step was to sell themselves. The Egyptians did not begin to live in cities in the days of Joseph, as the Massoretic seems to imply. The annual rise of the Nile would make this necessary from the very first. The Septuagint here again supports the Samaritan, and once more for the origin of the mistake we must turn to the old angular script. These are typical examples of the confusion of *resh* and *daleth*.

Take now the letters *mem* and *nun*. There is absolutely no resemblance between these two letters either in the square (מ, final form ם; and נ, final form ן), or in the Samaritan (𐤌 and 𐤎) script; but in the earliest angular script (𐤌 and 𐤎) the likeness is close enough to make mistakes easy. This is illustrated in

a name of frequent occurrence, that of Jacob's youngest son. In the Massoretic it is consistently written *Benjamin*, and in the Samaritan invariably *Benjamim*. Who blundered it is impossible to say. Both forms yield a good and suitable meaning: *Benjamin*, 'Son of the right hand'—*i.e.* favourite son; *Benjamim*, 'Son of days,' referring either to his father's age or forecasting length of days for himself. The one thing certain is that error could have arisen only in copying from a manuscript in the old angular script. Again the Samaritan has *Pithon*, and the Massoretic *Pithom* in Exod. i. 11, where, as closer to the Egyptian, the latter is probably correct. Other cases are found, *e.g.* in Num. xxxii. 35—Massoretic, *Shophan*; Samaritan *Shuphim*—and in Deut. xii. 21. In this latter case there is also a confusion between *kaph* and *vav*, which have any resemblance to each other only in the ancient script. But if the Torah once existed in the old angular characters, this carries us back to a very early period in the history of Israel.

We may glance for a moment at a set of variants which, while properly included under those arising from mistakes of hearing, are due to a Samaritan peculiarity. In reading Hebrew, the Samaritans have never pronounced the gutturals. A scribe, therefore, writing to dictation, unless well acquainted with the text, might easily mistake *aleph* for 'ain, *he* for *cheth*, and so on. In this way numerous variants have arisen. Many of the Samaritan acrostic poems begin with 'ain instead of *aleph*. This defective pronunciation is not due to any inability like that from which the Ephraimites suffered in the days of Jephthah (Judges xii. 6). Arabic, a language rich in gutturals, they speak perfectly. When did they acquire the peculiarity, and why do they adhere to it so tenaciously?

They did not learn it from the Greeks, who had χ , *chi*, and the rough breathing, as well as γ , *gamma*, which early began to be pronounced like the Arabic *ghain*; nor from the Persians, for under them Aramaic, a language with its full complement of gutturals, was spoken; nor from the Assyrians, for they had at least one strong guttural, *cheth*, as heard in the names of Sennacherib and Esar-haddon. Going back to the days of Ahab we find, through the alliance of that monarch with Tyre, a regnant Phœnician influence in Israel. Now the Phœnicians spoke Hebrew, dropping the gutturals as the Samaritans do. This custom evidently prevailed when the Greeks received from them their alphabet, not later than 1400 B.C. The Greeks attached vowel sounds to the unpronounced guttural symbols of the Phœnicians, and invented signs for their own gutturals. During Phœnician ascendancy, under patronage of the court, men might come to regard this pronunciation as a mark of refinement and culture. No more would be required to secure its rapid spread among the people. Under a similar idea the Arabic *qaf* has almost disappeared in certain districts of Syria and Palestine, being thinned away to a mere catch in the breath. The higher and better-educated classes would be the more susceptible to this influence. The law would therefore be read in this way, and the custom would be maintained with all the greater firmness because it furnished an added note of distinction between them and the men of the south. The priest who brought back the law from Assyria would bring back also the patriotic pronunciation, and it would be stereotyped for the Samaritans as a holy thing from its association with the sacred volume. The pronunciation, therefore, may be regarded as a witness to the ancient date of the Torah.

Following various lines of inquiry, we have been led decisively to the conclusion that the positions of advanced Criticism assailed by Dr. Thomson—positions essential to the whole Critical system—are quite untenable. As against Critical assertions, evidence has been led which shows that Deuteronomy was no ‘pious fraud,’ and could not have been the earliest legislative book, that the complete Torah must have been in the hands of Israel long before the days of Ezra, while there is good reason to believe that it existed in its integrity at least at the beginning of the Hebrew monarchy.

We need not here carry further our account of Dr. Thomson’s argument; but what is written may enable impartial readers to see that the Critical building, with all its boasted strength and symmetry, tends to crumble in the light of growing knowledge as a dream-palace dissolves at the touch of dawn.¹

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra.*



TELL HUM: RUINS OF CAPERNAUM
(p. 187)

CHAPTER XIX

Eventide.

THE remaining years of Thomson's life saw a certain decline of strength, but they were marked as ever by incessant industry. With unflagging zeal he pursued every line of inquiry that held promise of light upon the Holy Scriptures. He gave himself with special earnestness to the Critical study of the Gospels. He had in view a volume of original work dealing with the Synoptic Problem, in which he would have sought to demonstrate the priority of Matthew to Mark, contrary to the most widely accepted Critical theory.

He became a member of the Victoria Institute, or Philosophical Society of Great Britain, in London. To this Society in 1920 he read a paper on 'The Pentateuch of the Samaritans: When they got it, and Whence,' in which he elaborated the theory advocated in his book; and another on 'The Readers for whom Matthew wrote his Hebrew Gospel.' His view was that Matthew's Gospel, written at first in Hebrew—*i.e.* Aramaic—was designed, not for his fellow-countrymen in Palestine, who knew Greek sufficiently well, but for the Jewish communities in Mesopotamia whose mother tongue was Aramaic, and who would read Greek, if at all, with difficulty. Among the converts on the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem there must have been many temporary sojourners of Eastern Jewry. They could have seen little of Jesus, and could have learned little during their brief stay.

On their return home something more would be necessary than simple declaration of their belief that One crucified as a malefactor was the Messiah promised to the Fathers. Could an apostle have gone with them, their minds would have been at rest. As that was impossible, a written record giving an account of Jesus, of what He did and taught, would be almost a necessity. Dr. Thomson shows how well fitted this Gospel was for the purpose, noting specially its marked Semitic character. If it be objected that the Greek of St. Matthew lacks the usual marks of translation from the Aramaic, the answer is that Matthew may have made the translation himself. An author translating his own work from one familiar tongue into another practically composes anew, and the ordinary indications of translation will not appear. The nearly contemporary case of Josephus is cited, who tells us that he wrote his history of *The Wars of the Jews* 'in the language of our own country and sent it . . . to those of our own nation beyond the Euphrates'—the very readers to whom, on Thomson's theory, the Aramaic Gospel was addressed. Later, Josephus rendered his history into Greek in which you will find no traces of translation.

Thomson argues that there must have been a Christian Church in Babylon at least as early as A.D. 60, over which the Apostle Peter, accompanied by Mark, was presiding (1 Pet. v. 13). The city here referred to must be the literal Babylon. There is no trace in Apostolic or sub-Apostolic times of Babylon being employed as a pseudonym for Rome, save in the book of Revelation.

The death of Professor James Robertson in December 1920 left Thomson with a sense of loneliness which was deepened when, a year later, his old friend and publisher, Andrew Elliot, passed away. In those days

he found much solace and cheer in the friendly and thoughtful companionship of that brilliant Semitic scholar, Professor A. R. S. Kennedy, of Edinburgh University. He still frequented gatherings of the brotherhood, valuing the intellectual stimulus found there, and proving that he had lost none of his nimbleness and skill in dialectic, and his swiftness in repartee.

In the winter of 1922-23 Mrs. Thomson was for some time critically ill. During that anxious time there were many fears for him in his enfeebled condition. But he bore himself with singular fortitude, and on her happy recovery hopes were high of better days to come. With the advancing summer, however, it became manifest that his strength was failing. But there was no failing of mind, and his intellectual interests remained vivid as ever. The evening of his day of life fell calm and beautiful. On the 9th of June 1923 very peacefully he entered into rest.

Thomson was always proudly conscious how much he owed to the loving influence, radiant and strong, that surrounded him in his home, creating an atmosphere of comfort where his every want was anticipated. Mrs. Thomson's sympathetic interest in his scholarly and literary enterprises was an unfailing source of encouragement and strength. Here we find the secret of his long-continued intellectual vigour and his sustained, fruitful toil.

From boyhood Thomson had been a lover of books. They were in a true sense his friends and comrades. His library grew to vast dimensions, including many rare and valuable works. It was strong in History and Philosophy, and works of Old and New Testament scholarship; while Science and Belles-lettres were well represented. With characteristic generosity he arranged that his books should find room in Stirling

Public Library, and be available for use by the brethren of the local Presbyteries and others of a studious turn of mind. He also left a sum of money to provide for additions of new books in the future.

Endowed with many gifts, Dr. Thomson possessed a deep vein of humour. His wit, rapier-like in keenness, was yet kindly, never inflicting a rankling wound. Good fun he thoroughly enjoyed, and his laughter was contagious. Little children loved him, and when among them, as one observed, 'he was the youngest of them all.' A singular tribute this to his simplicity and purity of heart. He never spoke evil of any man, and certain it is that he never thought it. He was extraordinarily generous in his judgment of others. Of envy he was entirely free: the success of his brethren brought him unmingled joy. A great reward was his in troops of loyal and devoted friends. His trust in God made him a convinced and resolute optimist. Despite the troubles of the present he turned to the future a very bright and hopeful eye.

The man was greater than all his gifts. Looking back to-day, one sees him as a loyal son of the Church, discharging with fidelity the duties of an elder, his unaffected brotherliness and the gracious influence of his character a perpetual benediction. For the Church he cherished a deep affection. Among his brethren there he was 'just one of ourselves': humble, devout, simple-hearted. A stranger might not have discerned the learned pundit under the unassuming exterior.

It is a very gracious and beautiful memory our friend has left us—the memory of an accomplished scholar who joyfully brought of his best to lay at his Master's feet: the memory of a high-souled, chivalrous, Christian gentleman.

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